



PHD

Globalisation and the National Imaginary in Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian Cinema

Pinazza, Natalia

Award date:
2012

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

[Link to publication](#)

Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:
openaccess@bath.ac.uk

Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Access is subject to the above licence, if given. If no licence is specified above, original content in this thesis is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Any third-party copyright material present remains the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed under its existing terms.

Take down policy

If you consider content within Bath's Research Portal to be in breach of UK law, please contact: openaccess@bath.ac.uk with the details. Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

Globalisation and the National Imaginary in Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian Cinema

Submitted by Natália Pinazza

for the degree of PhD
of the University of Bath
December, 2011

Copyright

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author.

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.

This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Axel Goodbody and Wendy Everett for encouraging my academic development and for supporting me during my Masters, PhD proposal, funding application and supervision. I am also grateful to Debbie Martin for always offering feedback and for her supervision at the last stages of the thesis. The Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme and the University of Bath have provided funding for my studies and the financial support I have needed to attend conferences. I am very grateful to the SALC (Self-Access Language Centre) staff and to Anne Jordan for her unfailing support during these three years.

I am indebted to many friends across the globe. Special thanks goes to my PhD colleagues, who made this experience much more enjoyable, in particular to Bilge, Christos, Dimitris, Fabio, Gabriela and Lenka. My friend Rosa Riádigos and her son, Mateo, made me feel at home during my stay in Buenos Aires. Louis Bayman made valuable comments on my work, and I appreciate his time and perspicacity. I also would like to thank the academic staff of the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Sheffield, in particular Phil Swanson, Imma Cristina Roura and Pascale Baker for the support I got in the final stages of my thesis. Melão, Jú Carbonari, Vivien Silvey, Marie France-Savard, Larinda Timu, Annika Månsson were also present during this experience.

I would like to thank my family: Pai, Mãe, Camila, avós, tias, tios e primos. They managed to be close even when they were far.

Above all, I owe my deepest gratitude to Stuart for his support, encouragement and patience.

I dedicate my three years of work to the memory of my grandfather Ezio Appezzato, my godfather Antônio Hermínio Pinazza, and my departmental colleague and friend Rosa Orlando.

Abstract

The thesis aims to uncover some of the many ways in which contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema have registered and helped to construct national identity since the mid 1990s, when, after almost collapsing at the height of the debt crisis of the previous two decades of military dictatorship, film production experienced a boom as a result of new film legislation. The transition from dictatorship to democracy and the adoption of the neoliberal economic model were accompanied by the erosion of the nation-state, an increase in international agreements and the formation of regional blocs such as Mercosur. The thesis draws primarily on postcolonial and film theories to show how the socio-political aspects of the transition engendered changes in the ways in which the nation is constructed. The thesis does this through engaging with discourses pertaining to the formation of supra-national communities via case studies of selected films. Among the questions addressed are the following: How have Argentine and Brazilian films negotiated the impact of globalisation on identities? How have cinematic practices and filmic representations in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas encouraged critical reflection on the countries' position in a global system? I construct an argument in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 for the continued relevance of a critical focus on the nation in a globalised era in which trends in criticism are set toward a transnational approach. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 explore how films have re-constructed the national in the face of the growing impact of globalised identities, by engaging with supra-national entities such as diasporic, Lusophone, Ibero-American, and regional communities. Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films are shown to display complex identity-negotiations in a globalised context and, in turn, pose meta-critical questions for filmic (and more general cultural) analysis in a transnational context.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
ABBREVIATIONS	6
LIST OF FIGURES	7
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	8
1. GLOBALISATION AND THE NATIONAL IMAGINARY IN CONTEMPORARY ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN CINEMA.....	8
1. The re-emergence of Argentine cinema	10
2. The re-emergence of Brazilian cinema.....	13
2. CONTEMPORARY ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN CINEMA AND COMMUNITY BUILDING	16
3. AIMS OF THE THESIS	21
4. THESIS OUTLINE	23
5. LITERATURE SURVEY.....	26
6. METHODOLOGY	30
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF GLOBALISATION AND FILMMAKING IN ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL	33
7. A MOVE AWAY FROM THE NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL BINARY	33
8. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION: LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA IN TRANSITION	44
9. ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN NATIONAL CINEMA AND THEIR 'THIRD WORLD' STATUS IN A GLOBAL ERA	51
CHAPTER 3. NATIONAL SPACES AND GLOBALISATION	59
10. <i>SERTÃO</i> AND PATAGONIA: THE CORNERSTONES OF THE MODERN STATE	59
11. CINEMATIC RETURN TO THE <i>SERTÃO</i> AND PATAGONIA	63
12. <i>CENTRAL STATION</i> : FROM THE SEA TO THE <i>SERTÃO</i>	66
13. PATAGONIA AS A REFUGE IN <i>BORN AND BRED</i>	75
14. CONCLUSION	81
CHAPTER 4. EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION IN ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN NARRATIVES OF NATIONHOOD	86
15. EUROPEAN HERITAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ARGENTINE IDENTITY: <i>BAR EL CHINO</i> AND <i>INHERITANCE</i>	87
16. ESCAPING MODERNITY: <i>CINEMA, ASPIRINS AND VULTURES</i>	101
17. CONCLUSION	107
CHAPTER 5. THE 'EUROPEANNESS' OF ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN CINEMA.....	111
18. CHALLENGING FIXED NOTIONS OF EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA	112
19. IN SEARCH OF A EUROPEAN IDENTITY: <i>THE HUNGARIAN PASSPORT</i>	116
20. DETERRITORIALISING AND RETERRITORIALISING JOURNEYS.....	121
21. SELF-REFLEXIVITY ON DISPLACEMENT AND THE FILMMAKING PROCESS.....	125
22. EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ESCAPISM: <i>LOST EMBRACE</i>	130
23. CONCLUSION	140
CHAPTER 6. THE FORMER COLONISER AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GLOBALISED NATIONAL IDENTITY	145
24. REVERSE MIGRATION: FROM ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL TO THE IBERIAN PENINSULA	147
25. GLOBALISATION AND IBERO-AMERICAN CINEMA	149
26. LANGUAGE AND COLONIAL ANXIETY.....	151
27. DISPLACEMENT AS A RESULT OF ECONOMIC AND IDENTITY CRISIS.....	158
28. RE-TERRITORIALISATION AND THE COLONIAL PAST	168
CHAPTER 7. CINEMA AND MERCOSUR: NEGOTIATING REGIONAL IDENTITY	177

29. JOURNEY AND BORDER CROSSING: <i>THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES</i> AND <i>ROLLING FAMILY</i>	179
30. WORKING AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS: <i>THE POPE'S TOILET</i>	188
31. BORDERS AS A GETAWAY: <i>THE FISH CHILD</i>	197
32. CONCLUSION	202
CONCLUSION	205
BIBLIOGRAPHY	219
FILMOGRAPHY	230

Abbreviations

ANCINE	Agência Nacional do Cinema da República Federativa do Brasil (Brazilian National Cinema Agency)
BAFICI	Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente
CPLP	Comunidades dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese Language Countries)
DEISICA	Departamento. de Estudio e Investigación del Sindicato de la Industria Cinematográfica Argentina
EU	European Union
INCAA	Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales (Argentine National Institute of Film and Audiovisual Arts)
MERCOSUL	Portuguese: Mercado Comum do Sul (Common Market of the South)
MERCOSUR	Spanish: Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the South)
MFMM	Mercosur/ Mercosul Film Market
MPAA	Motion Pictures Association of America
NAFTA	North American Free Trade agreement
SOCINE	Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Cinema e de Audiovisual (The Brazilian Society of Audiovisual and Cinema Studies)
OMA	Observatorio Mercosur/Mercosul Audiovisual
RECAM	Reunión Especializada de Autoridades Cinematográficas y Audiovisuales del Mercosur/ Reunião Especializada de Autoridades Cinematográficas e Audiovisuais do Mercosul (Reunion of Cinematographic and Audiovisual Authorities of Mercosur)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

List of Figures

Fig. 1 North-eastern Brazil and Argentine Patagonia	p. 60
Fig. 2 <i>Central Station</i> and <i>Black God White Devil</i>	p. 69
Fig. 3 <i>Central Station</i>	p. 72
Fig. 4 <i>Born and Bred</i>	p. 78
Fig. 5 <i>Bar El Chino</i>	p. 87
Fig. 6 <i>Inheritance</i>	p. 95
Fig. 7 <i>The Hungarian Passport</i>	p.121
Fig. 8 <i>Lost Embrace</i>	p. 133
Fig. 9 <i>Lost Embrace</i>	p. 134
Fig. 10 <i>Lost Embrace</i>	p. 138
Fig. 11 <i>Foreign Land</i>	p. 162
Fig. 12 <i>Martín (Hache)</i>	p. 164
Fig. 13 <i>Foreign Land</i>	p. 165
Fig. 14 <i>Foreign Land</i>	p. 167
Fig. 15 <i>Rolling Family</i>	p. 186
Fig. 16 <i>The Pope's Toilet</i>	p. 188
Fig. 17 <i>The Fish Child</i>	p. 196
Fig. 18 <i>Lion's Den</i>	p. 199
Fig. 19 <i>The Fish Child</i> and <i>Lion's Den</i>	p. 199
Fig. 20 <i>The Hungarian Passport; Lost Embrace; Foreign Land; Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures; Lion's Den and Inheritance</i>	p. 212

Chapter 1. Introduction

Globalisation and the National Imaginary in Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian Cinema

Firstly, it is important to differentiate the ‘new’ Argentine and Brazilian cinema movements of the 1960s also known, respectively, as *Nuevo Cine Argentino* and *Cinema Novo*, from the ‘new’ Argentine and Brazilian cinemas of the 1990s and the 2000s which are the subject of this thesis. Whilst the former suggested a revolutionary cinema, a Third Cinema that condemns both the capitalist system and the military dictatorships in the 1960s, and engaged quite explicitly with political activities, the latter emerged after the re-establishment of democratic governments which instituted new cultural policies that were more propitious for filmmaking. In order to avoid confusion, I opt to refer to these re-emergent cinemas as ‘contemporary’ Argentine and Brazilian cinema rather than ‘new’ Argentine and Brazilian cinema. I have also adopted the term ‘contemporary’, as the films analysed here were released within the 15 years prior to completion of the thesis, and can thus be understood as belonging to the contemporary era. This historical fact is added to by the fact that there are broad similarities of theme, aesthetic concerns, production context, and cultural and social preoccupations in the films made during this fifteen-year period, despite important developments during this period, which I will discuss further at relevant points below.

Given that the focus of this study is on how Argentine and Brazilian films (1996-2009) have dealt with the impact of globalisation on national, regional, diasporic and linguistic identities, the title might appear contradictory, as it implies that the imaginary in question is formed only at a national level. In fact, the hypothesis underlying this study is that the increase in the significance of supra-national communities in a globalised context has led to the formation of other imaginaries that transcend national boundaries. This gives rise to the question: if the notion of a national cinema is this problematic, how can certain films be understood as Argentine or Brazilian? The criteria applied in selecting my film corpus are that Argentina and Brazil must be involved in the coproduction, and that the films must

engage with themes directly relating to Argentine/ Brazilian society and identity. It is important to recognise that the concepts of supra-national and transnational identity do not preclude notions of national identity – an argument constructed in Chapter 2 and advanced via film analysis throughout the thesis. In critically assessing existing literature and analysing a selected corpus of films, I argue for the continued importance of nation as a framework in the context of globalisation and postcolonialism. The understanding of globalisation in this thesis is established by George Ritzer, who defines globalisation as ‘a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows’ (2010: 519). My argument will focus primarily on two aspects of globalisation that inform the films both in terms of subject matter and mode of production: the impacts of globalisation’s prevailing economic system, neoliberalism,¹ with related international integration in terms of trade, and issues related to the increase in circulation of people. The cultural dimensions of globalisation include the transnational filmmaking practices that will be discussed in this thesis. Filmic texts have self-consciously appropriated discourses of globalisation and supra-national communities in order to deal with issues relating to national identity and culture. The use of the label ‘Argentine’ and ‘Brazilian’ to address film coproductions that can be inserted within more than one cinema tradition reveals another function of the national framework: namely, that the categorisation of a film according to its nationality is a powerful marketing strategy for film festivals and awards, as spectators in general are unlikely to use the term ‘international coproduction’ to describe a film (let alone ‘transnational’). Therefore, instead of approaching film coproductions within a purely transnational framework, I argue that a number of films clearly engage with supra-national community building while still addressing national concerns. Furthermore, the category of the national cannot be ignored when considering the public role of culture since both cinemas remain largely dependent on the state. After analysing how the films selected for case studies re-negotiate national identity with regards to globalisation, my conclusion (Chapter 8)

¹ Neoliberalism is considered to be an economic model that prevails in the current global economic order, and indicates a marked preference for free market capitalism over statist and protectionist measures. In fact, in scholarship on globalisation theories, neoliberalism often appears as a phenomenon which is closely related to globalisation (e.g. ‘Neoliberal Globalisation’ (Antonio, 2007)). Moreover, George Ritzer states that ‘neoliberalism has arguably been the most important theory in the field of globalisation studies’ (2010: 110).

will reassess my decision to retain the term 'national' as a useful tool with which to review existing theoretical readings.

The re-emergence of Argentine and Brazilian cinema in the 1990s: A brief history

It is useful to start by presenting an overview of the key events that contributed to the re-emergence of national cinema in Argentina and Brazil. This is done in order to understand the socio-economic context to the films and how it prompted increased interaction between Argentinean and Brazilian cinema and transnational cinematic aesthetics. The period in question begins in the mid-1990s when, after almost collapsing during the debt crisis of the previous two decades, Argentine and Brazilian film productions were transformed by new film legislation: the New Cinema Law (1994) in Argentina and the Audiovisual Law (1993) in Brazil. This section will provide an overall picture of the re-emergence of these two national cinemas from the mid-1990s to the crisis of 2001 in Argentina and the creation of a national Cinema Agency, ANCINE, in 2000 in Brazil. Although both cinematic revivals occurred at a moment marked by changes of regime as well as economic instability, they have developed in markedly different ways in the two countries, and, given the particular conditions of their emergence, this section will present them separately.

The re-emergence of Argentine cinema

After the end of the dictatorship in 1983, Raúl Alfonsín was the first democratically elected President of Argentina, but after a crisis brought on by hyperinflation which resulted in rioting in the streets of Buenos Aires, Alfonsín was forced to resign in 1989 six months before his official term ended. In the same year, Peronist candidate Carlos Saúl Menem won the elections. Although his campaign promoted social welfare and was opposed to the privatisation of state enterprises, his administration can be characterised as one of neoliberal policies that favoured the private sector and commercial business over culture. As a result, during Menem's first term in office the Argentine film industry came close to bankruptcy: only 17 films

were released in 1991 and just ten were made in 1992 (Falicov 2007: 80). Furthermore, economic problems including a dramatic increase in unemployment prevented the general public from going to the movies, engendering the closure of many movie theatres. The fate of the Argentine film industry changed when in 1994 a law dubbed the *Ley de Cine* (Cinema Law) was passed, and the Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía (National Institute of Cinematography) was re-named the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales, also known as INCAA (National Institute for Film and Audiovisual Arts). The cinema law is widely considered to be the key factor in the growth of national film production, as it developed new revenue-producing mechanisms such as taxes on video rentals and television advertisements in addition to the existing tax on box-office receipts. Moreover, the new law encompassed protectionist policies such as screen quotas, and encouraged an alternative to the traditional model of state support, with the participation of television stations as film producers. As a consequence, many of the films that received co-production financing from private television stations, including for example the first Argentine blockbuster *Cops* (*Comodines*, Jorge Nisco, 1997), were cast with television actors. The combination of well-known television actors, Hollywood narrative structure and television advertising campaigns attracted a larger number of Argentineans to the cinema, and in 1997 Argentine cinema outperformed Hollywood and others (Falicov, 2007) in the internal market, thereby constituting the first signs of a so-called cinematic renaissance. However, the increasing influence of television in Argentine films and the fact that INCAA was moving towards the Hollywood commercial model of cinema triggered a debate about the role of the state. On the one hand, there was a belief that the state has the responsibility to protect national culture from the market, whereas on the other the argument put forward was that the development of a film industry should be encouraged in order to attract a sizable home audience.

Although INCAA prioritised commercial films over independent cinema, it provided independent filmmakers with a few funding opportunities and initiated a short film competition for debut filmmakers that resulted in *Historias Breves* (1995), a compilation of the winning entries, which helped Argentine independent cinema emerge onto the national cultural scene. It was during this festival that many young filmmakers, including, for instance, Bruno Stagnaro and Adrián Caetano, the directors of the founding film of New Argentine Cinema, *Pizza, Beer, Cigarettes*

(*Pizza, birra, faso* 1997), had the opportunity to meet and discuss the possibilities of collaborating on film projects. Furthermore, one of the short films of *Historia Breves* was *Dead King* (*Rey Muerto*, 1995) directed by Lucrecia Martel, an independent filmmaker who later garnered international acclaim with the award-winning *The Swamp* (*La ciénaga*, 2001) and *The Holy Girl* (*La niña santa*, 2004). These new films were often grouped under the terms: *el nuevo cine argentino* (New Argentine Cinema), *las películas argentinas jóvenes de éxito* (Young Argentine Film Successes) and *el nuevo cine independiente argentino* (New Independent Argentine Cinema). Nevertheless, unlike the filmmakers of *Cine Liberación* in the 1960s, who declared a manifesto which contained a set of ideas, this new crop of Argentine filmmakers would appear to reject the notion of belonging to a specific movement.

Critics coincide in arguing that this new independent cinema emanated from the proliferation of film schools in Argentina from the late 1980s onwards and the rise in film criticism in the 1990s, including for example, the launching of film journals such as: *Film*, *Sin cortes*, *Ossessione* and *Haciendo cine* that supplemented the older, established title *El Amante de cine*. In addition to these factors, the reestablishment of the Mar del Plata International Film Festival in 1996 after a 26 year hiatus, and the inauguration of the Buenos Aires Festival de Cine Independiente (BAFICI), were crucial to the promotion of Argentine cinema and its re-emergence on the international scene. In this regard, after winning the short film prize for *Negocios* (1995) at the Mar del Plata film festival, Pablo Trapero, one of the key figures in the recent renaissance of Argentine cinema, won a grant from the Rotterdam film festival, the Hubert Bals Funds, to make his first feature film, the internationally acclaimed *Crane World* (*Mundo grúa*, 1999).

In December 2001, Fernando de la Rúa's government froze personal deposits and prevented individuals from accessing their savings in an attempt to avoid a collapse in the banking system. The population reacted to this economic measure, also known as *El Corralito*, with wide-scale protests which resulted in violent riots that forced President Fernando de la Rúa to resign. In this chaotic scenario, the Argentine political system plunged into crisis, seeing a succession of five presidents within a period of two weeks. Despite the economic recession and the uncertain future of the Argentine film industry, a number of low budget films were produced,

and the crisis in fact became a motivation for artistic expression. At the same time, the devaluation of the Argentine peso had a negative effect on national film production, because film stock and equipment were usually imported and this made the cost of a film rise dramatically. Nevertheless, this did create favourable conditions for co-productions, as human resources expenses were budgeted in Argentine pesos, and the exchange rates were extremely favourable for outside producers (Meleiro, 2006: 113). Indeed, transnational co-productions, grants obtained through international film festivals and private investors were the main sources of funding available for Argentine filmmakers during the recession.

The re-emergence of Brazilian cinema

The boom in film production in Brazil is also known as the *retomada do cinema brasileiro*, which some critics refer to as the 'Brazilian cinematic renaissance' or 'rebirth of Brazilian cinema'. Nevertheless, the use of the terms 'retomada', 'rebirth' and 'renaissance' is problematic, for 'retomada' derives from the Portuguese verb 'retomar', literally translated into English as 'retake', which implies that Brazilian cinema production was 'retaken' after a period of stagnation. From this understanding, Pedro Butcher (2005) remarks that 'retomada' consists of a process of getting back to something that already has a history, a pre-existing cinema, and thus he argues that 'retomada' is different from 'renaissance' and 'rebirth', as it is not possible to retake something that is dead. In this regard, Luiz Zanin Orichchio (2003) contends that Brazilian cinema production was not 'dead' after the extinction of Embrafilme (The Brazilian Film Company), but almost 'zero'. According to Lucia Nagib (2006), the prevailing view is that Brazilian cinema in the 1990s had to start from 'zero', and this became a motif in some films of the period which represented the nation's quest for self-redefinition. Indeed, many films made in the 1990s, as I will argue in Chapter 3, often chart the decline of the nation-state, while seeking to rebuild a sense of community.

The administration of Fernando Collor de Mello, the first President democratically elected after the end of the dictatorship, did away with government support for Brazil's film industry. In particular it withdrew funding from Embrafilme,

thereby plunging national cinema production into a profound crisis. In fact, the crisis in cinema reflected the general malaise affecting the whole nation in 1992. However, after Collor was impeached for corruption he was replaced by the then vice President, Itamar Franco, whose government implemented the Audiovisual Law (*Lei do Audiovisual*) in 1993, a move which proved to be a crucial factor in the growth of Brazilian cinema. Together with a number of resources coming from the Rouanet Law, which establishes public policies for national culture, the Audiovisual Law has subsidised nearly all Brazilian film production since 1995. Moreover, this law has made provision for tax write-offs for interested corporate investors and encouraged international film distribution companies to invest in national productions. Consequently, major American companies such as Columbia and Warner became involved with national production. Butcher (2005) also cites Riofilmes as one of the contributors to this cinematic revival, as it was the only distributor to work in film between 1992 and 1994, when the public and market rejection of national cinema was still high. The state has played a very important role in the revival of Brazilian cinema, by creating new strategic initiatives and programmes and making a larger proportion of income taxes available for cultural activities as well as refurbishing movie theatres throughout the country.

Since the reformulation of the cultural sponsorship laws, Brazilian film production has increased dramatically. For whilst fewer than twelve films were made in the early 1990s, 155 feature films and more than 100 documentaries were made between 1995 and 2000 (Moisés, 2003: 11). The first sign of the national cinematic revival was Carla Camurati's *Carlota Joaquina: Princess of Brazil* (*Carlota Joaquina: princesa do Brasil*, 1995), which attracted viewing figures of over one million. Furthermore, three Brazilian films were nominated for the Oscar for best foreign language film between 1996 and 1999: *O quatrilho* (Fábio Barreto, 1995 nominated in 1996), *Four Days in September* (*O que é isso, companheiro?*, Bruno Barreto, 1997 nominated in 1998) and *Central Station* (*Central do Brasil*, Walter Salles, 1998 nominated in 1999).

Similarly to the Argentine case, the re-emergence of Brazilian cinema in the mid 1990s was due in large part to the appearance of a new generation of filmmakers who moved away from the notions of national cinema entrenched by

filmmakers associated with the avant-garde movements of the 1960s. Perhaps this shift from earlier filmmaking aesthetics was a result of the experiences that the new crop of professionals had gained in other audiovisual media, for the crisis in national production in the early 1990s forced production companies to turn to different types of media, in particular through advertising. In this context, key figures of the Brazilian cinematic revival, including Fernando Meirelles, Walter Salles and Andrucha Waddington, all worked for important audiovisual production companies in Brazil: O₂, Videofilmes and Conspiração, respectively. Consequently, the films of debut filmmakers were heavily influenced by the language of television, advertising and video clips. It is also the case that using a language influenced by the immediacy and viewing of television proved an effective way to attract Brazilian spectators to the cinema, and thus, expand the national cinema's share of the market. Aware of these factors, Globo, the most influential television network in Brazil, created a film subsidiary called Globo Filmes in order to invest in national production. Subsequently, this commercial model of film production often benefited from television merchandising and featured famous television actors.

Despite the reformulation of the law and the consequent aforementioned changes, the Brazilian film industry still lacked a more systematic organisation. As Gustavo Dahl (2006) points out, the tax deduction model privileged production over other equally important sectors of the film industry, including distribution and exhibition. In the light of this problem, the III Brazilian Cinema Congress was held in 2000, gathering filmmakers and general representatives of filmmaking throughout the country with the aim of stressing the pressing need for a more effective film policy (Dahl, 2006). It was in response to this call that Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government created the National Cinema Agency (ANCINE). Since its creation, ANCINE has played a key role in the development of a film industry in Brazil, by dealing with private investors and promoting contests that give debut filmmakers and scriptwriters an opportunity to make films. Moreover, because of its transparency of data and reports on the film industry in Brazil, ANCINE's website has facilitated research into the Brazilian film industry.

Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema and community building

One of the consequences of the shift from dictatorship to democracy in the mid 1980s and the subsequent adoption of the neoliberal economic model in the 1990s was a profound change in the imagined space of the nation. In this regard, it could be argued that contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have often portrayed the nation as fragmented while at the same time rebuilding a sense of community mobilised around the experience of social chaos (an argument developed in more detail in Chapter 3). When discussing national cinema, film scholars almost invariably take Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) as their point of departure. Anderson's theory is attractive to film scholars at least in part because they deal with media in which imagined scenarios are as important as real ones. Drawing on Anderson, Andrew Higson defines national cinema:

On the one hand, a national cinema seems to look inward, reflecting on the nation itself, on its past, present, and future, its cultural heritage, its indigenous traditions, its sense of common identity and continuity. On the other hand, a national cinema seems to look out across its borders, asserting its difference from other national cinemas, proclaiming its sense of otherness (2006: 18).

However, in the context of globalisation, the formation of imagined communities outside national boundaries has intensified, and as a consequence, other senses of belonging became increasingly prominent. If on the one hand the adoption of a neoliberal economic system triggered the erosion of the nation-state², on the other, it paved the way for the increase in multilateral agreements as well as the formation of regional blocs, which facilitated the emergence of other imaginaries than the national. For this reason, recent scholarship has also adapted Anderson's

² Drawing on David Harvey's notion of 'time-space compression', Zygmunt Bauman argues that the economy in a globalised context is subject to the velocity of the electronic signal, which 'is practically free from constraints related to the territory inside which it originated' (1998: 55). As a consequence, 'financial flows are largely beyond the control of national governments' because of a 'growing supra-national influence' (1998: 56). In this regard, G.H. von Wright argues that the 'nation-state, it seems, is eroding or perhaps "withering away"' (von Wright in Bauman 1998: 56).

concept of imagined communities to explore the relationship between contemporary filmmaking and the formation of diasporic (e.g. Iordanova and Cheung, 2010), linguistic (e.g. Ferreira, 2008), and regional communities (e.g. Galperin, 1999). In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (2002), Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod and Brian Larkin argue that the concepts put forward by Anderson offer a 'means of theorizing the formation of collectivities that cross ruptures of space and are outside formal definitions of "culture"' (2002: 5). In this thesis too, although Anderson's concept was originally aimed at explaining the origins of nationalism, its usage is extended to include supra-national communities.

It is worth mentioning that the use of the term 'imaginary' can be problematic, as pointed out by Michael Walsh in his article 'National cinema, national imaginary' (1996). According to Walsh, the term 'imaginary' has been imprecisely used in literature on national cinema as it can be related both to Anderson's concept 'imagined communities' and to Lacanian theory. Therefore, it is important to establish that the use of 'imaginary' employed in this thesis is not grounded in Lacanian formulations relating to the identificatory mechanisms following the mirror phase. Instead, my critical use of 'imaginary' is related to Anderson's definition of the nation as:

[a]n imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (2006: 6)

In line with Anderson's argument that 'communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (2006: 6), this study is less interested in assessing the authenticity or truthfulness of community representation than the mechanisms of community building employed by films in terms of both aesthetics and production. To this end, I have identified in Anderson's work some key elements that are relevant to my analysis of the films. One of the hypotheses here is that films featuring motifs that articulate the sense of simultaneity and belonging, including anthems, flags, passports, and borders, can reinforce the existence of an imagined community while actively interrogating the very articulations

of the experience of 'simultaneity', in Anderson's terms. If such images are increasingly significant in the context of contemporary film and culture across the globe, given the social and symbolic impact of globalisation, they receive a particular treatment in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, since both these countries had to negotiate the shift from being host countries of European immigrants to being a country of 'extra-communitarian' emigrants in the EU. I will show how this switch had a profound impact on previously established national narratives.

Another theme that is pertinent to community building in films is the family unity which more often than not is portrayed as fragmented and in decline in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas. In her book chapter 'Irresistible Romance: The Foundational Fictions of Latin America', Doris Sommer argues that 'marriage not only projected an ideal state, but also helped to realise the family alliances that supported national governments. If marriage is a "cause" of national stability, it is also an "effect" of the nation' (1990: 88). Indeed, the narratives of the films selected for this study involve divorce, death, crisis, and even murder within the family unit. Therefore, analysing the tensions that characterise the portrayal of the family unit in the films can offer important insights into the way the nation and its internal fragmentation are imagined.

Anderson further states that there is a 'strong affinity' between religious and national imaginings of the collective. This means that religious identity can serve as a replacement for national identity. As Peter Beyer (1994) has pointed out, religion can assume a growing significance for individuals and communities in global dispersal. Fostering an alternative imagined collective identity, narratives of Christianity are prominent in Lusophone, Iberoamerican and Latin American identities. While it would doubtless be rewarding to examine this enhanced role of religion in the context of globalisation and its reflection in the body of films analysed here, it is not central to my argument. I therefore limit my treatment of religion and its relationship with globalisation to comments in the analysis of specific films, in particular in Chapter 5, as the two diasporic films selected for case studies.

In analysing how the films engage with community building, attention will be paid to the significance of linguistic similarities and differences, as language is an

important element in community building. The origins of national consciousness, for Anderson, rely on the conjunction of Protestantism and the emergence of the printing press under a system of capitalism or, as he calls it 'print-capitalism', and the consequent vernacularisation of the language: '[t]hese fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community' (2006: 44). Both Argentina and Brazil are former colonised nations and share a common language and culture with their former imperial metropolis, which paves the way for discourses around Lusophony and a shared Ibero-American culture, as discussed in Chapter 6. Similarly, linguistic issues within the Southern Cone region are often addressed by the films selected in Chapter 7. In some diasporic and postcolonial films, as is argued in Chapter 5, language and accent are self-reflexive elements that comment on the location of the film as a cultural product.

It is clear that contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema have reflected and not only discourses surrounding the idea of the nation, but also the sense of belonging to a supra-national community. The way contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have been financed and promoted also reveals the significance of community building to these cinemas. Drawing on Anderson's theory, Hernán Galperin argues that '[c]ultural products are central to the reproduction of identities and the forging of social bonds, whether at the individual, group, national, or regional level' (1999: 3). This idea provides the basis for my first research question: how have films constructed the national in the face of the growing impact of globalised identities, by engaging with supra-national communities formed at national, regional, linguistic, and diasporic level? In order to answer this question, I will attempt to uncover some of the many ways in which a number of influential contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have often, in a metadiscursive sense, reaffirmed or challenged the promotion of political and cultural agendas that informed their own production. After reviewing existing research on contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema, I identify four predominant forms of 'imagined community' informing these cinemas, outlined below.

First, there are many contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films that construct narratives of nationhood, despite the decline of the state that followed the

adoption of a neoliberal economic model in the early 1990s. These are often linked to the shared experience of social chaos, more precisely, the economic crisis in Argentina and social violence in Brazil. Secondly, there exist films that are coproduced with countries which share a language or a cultural heritage due to the colonial legacy. For instance, Programa Ibermedia was created in 1997 in order to foster film production in the Iberoamerican countries. Similarly, to create a Lusophone cultural space and to encourage co-production between Brazil and Portugal, the Luso-Brazilian Coproduction Protocol was established in 1994. The origins of this protocol and its consequences are analysed in Chapter 6 in which Walter Salles and Daniela Thoma's *Foreign Land* (*Terra estrangeira*, 1996) is considered in depth. The third type of imagined community informing contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema concerns films that engage with identity building in the context of a dispersed population, and that deal with stories of diasporic and postcolonial subjects. In *Film Festival Yearbook 2 and Imagined Communities* Dina Iordanova and Ruby Cheung explore a phenomenon linked to the sense of shared supra-national identity: the increase in events aimed at diasporic communities, including for instance, Jewish Film Festivals. Their argument focuses on film festivals that are 'products of a post-colonial context and have often come about as a reaction to the consequences of colonialism, global dispersal, and life in diaspora', and which 'foster identity and community building, particularly where the community lacks a unifying political and social entity around which it could come together' (2010: 4).

The fourth and last form of imagined community explained in this thesis centres on community building within a geo-political boundary, as is the case with films that reflect the agenda of regional integration in the Southern Cone within a neoliberal context as promoted by Mercosur (or Mercosul in Portuguese). The creation of Mercosur is an instance of a supra-national community whose agenda informs contemporary Argentine and Brazilian filmmaking. Mercosur's recent cultural efforts to encourage production, distribution and circulation of films within the region recognise and promote the idea of a shared culture based on geographical proximity. In this context, Toby Miller and George Yúdice have examined Mercosur's input into creating a new 'imagined community' involving the familiarisation of the different countries with each other:

Mercosur's first Visual Arts Biennial in Brazil marked the advent of bilingualism in the south through texts produced in 'portunhol', a mix of Spanish and Portuguese. This hybrid is part of the search for a continental unity, a prerequisite for the legitimacy needed to push for monetary stabilisation, regional free trade, and so on (2002: 177).

In Chapter 6, the cultural agenda to promote regional identity carried out by Mercosur is examined more closely in terms of the effects it has in films from Argentina and Brazil. My analysis will focus on how films from the Southern Cone negotiate discourses regarding community building at a regional level, given the clear differences in ethnicity, race, language and in the experience of modernisation across the region. While the mechanisms of community building identified by Anderson will constitute the point of departure for the textual analysis, this study is more interested in the ways Argentine and Brazilian films problematise the mechanisms of community building, by engaging with difference and similarities. Bhabha presents nationalist discourses as fragile and highlights the need to challenge such narratives, which only work through the marginalisation of certain groups, as it seems to be necessary to suppress minority discourse (1994: 232). Therefore, my textual analysis will focus on the mechanisms of community building provided by Anderson (languages, flags, passports, religious symbols), but in order to investigate how contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have negotiated the impact of globalisation on collective identities and charted the experience of displacement and fragmentation of discourses.

Aims of the thesis

Since the early 1990s, Argentine and Brazilian film policies have struggled to repair the damage caused by the economic crisis that followed the end of the dictatorships in these countries, and to expand the national cinema's share of their home markets, in a context of domination by the US film industry. In little more than a decade, Argentina and Brazil, as well as other Latin American countries, have experienced a boom in film production that has transformed the international visibility and recognition of their national cinemas. At the time of writing, the growth in national

production shows no signs of abating: eight commercially released feature films in 1994 increased to seventy-nine in 2009 in Argentina,³ and fourteen such films in 1995 to eighty-four in 2009 in Brazil.⁴ Many of these productions have been commercially successful and acclaimed by national and international critics. International acclaimed contemporary films include *Nine Queens* (*Nueve reinas*, Fabian Bielinsky, 2000) and *The Holy Girl* from Argentina, and *Central Station* and *City of God* (*Cidade de Deus*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002) from Brazil.

The increase in international funding opportunities, in particular schemes such as the Hubert Bals project of the Rotterdam Film Festival and the Ibermedia programme, has secured access for a number of Latin American films to screens around the world. Nevertheless, recent literature has put great emphasis on the global and transnational dimensions of Latin American filmmaking and on a few successful international coproductions, thereby concealing the inequalities of the transnational exchange, in particular (but not only) US film industry domination of both distribution and exhibition sectors. And although the internationalisation process has been one of the crucial motors of Latin America's boom in filmmaking, little attention has been given to the imbalances of power that still govern transnational exchange in the film industry, as I will argue in Chapter 2. In conjunction with this, growing academic interest in Latin America has been instrumental in furthering scholarship in Latin American cultural studies. As a consequence, film studies have experienced a geopolitical decentring, as Kathleen Newman has argued:

Current scholarship on the transnational scale of cinematic circulation now takes for granted a geopolitical decentering of the discipline. Areas once considered peripheral (that is, less developed countries, the so-called Third World) are now seen as integral to the historical development of cinema. The assumption that the export of European and US cinema to the rest of the world, from the silent period onward, inspired only derivative image culture has been replaced by a dynamic model of cinematic exchange, where

³ Data compiled from http://sinca.cultura.gov.ar/archivos/tablas/Cine_Cantidad_de_titulos_estrenados_segun_origen_del_fil_m_Argentina_1994a2010.xls (accessed 9 July 2011).

⁴ Data compiled from www.ancine.gov.br/media/SAM/2009/SerieHistorica/1116.pdf (accessed 4 August 2010).

filmmakers around the world are known to have been in dialogue with one another's work, and other cultural and political exchanges to form the dynamic context of these dialogues (2010: 4).

Rather than duplicating existing literature on contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas (of which an overview is provided in Chapter 2), this thesis aims to examine the interfaces between global and local, national and transnational, and to assess the effects of globalisation on the ideological construction of the nation in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films. It does this by focusing in particular on the adoption of the neoliberal economic model and the increase in transnational practices in recent years in Argentina and Brazil. More specifically, the central purpose of this thesis is to investigate how these films negotiate differences and similarities within the national and supra-national community and, metacritically, pose questions regarding the situatedness of the countries within a transnational context. It examines how they do this in ways which now transcend national cinemas, in terms of production, distribution, subject matter and aesthetics. In essence, by exploring the blurred discourses between a community and its others, the differences and tensions within a community, and the problems in categorising films as national, this study aims to uncover some of the main ways in which contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema have engaged with discourses and practices of globalisation, and to contribute to the current decentring of cultural studies.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. In addition to providing a detailed literature review, Chapter 2 engages with questions of the national and transnational, in order to establish a critical framework that makes it possible to move beyond the binary approach to national/ transnational contexts. A framework is thus constructed which incorporates the notion that a critical form of transnationalism need not exclude the nation as a paradigm, at least for the analysis of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films. This perspective provides fertile ground for interrogating the usefulness and limitations of the concept of transnational cinema in the context of two national cinemas that remain largely dependent on the state. Uncovering the

mechanisms of community building in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas and exploring the validity of the national as a categorisation feed into another aim: to examine how films have use self-reflexivity to produce a sense of place and identity that reflects the globalised context in which they were made. I argue that determining the position of the cinemas of Argentina and Brazil within a global industry is vital to understanding their articulation of global and local, as films are in constant dialogue with their political and economic contexts. Here the argument suggests a move away from theoretical work that fixes Argentine and Brazilian culture as peripheral/marginal in order to explore the current position of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema in the context of recent changes in the global economic system such as the emergence of new economies and the establishment of a multipolar world order.

Chapter 3 explores the trends that have emerged in representations of the nation in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films. These emphasise the internal fragmentation of the nation, but also reflect the consolidating effect of shared experiences, such as the economic crisis in Argentina and social chaos in Brazil. A third aspect of recent Argentine and Brazilian films, in particular *Born and Bred* (*Nacido y criado*, Pablo Trapero, 2006) and *Central Station*, is the depiction of national spaces as fractured and heterogeneous through exploration of the contrast between the city and the country, and the destabilisation of traditional notions of central and peripheral identities and places within national boundaries. In examining how these two contemporary films revisit important locations that are often associated with but mark a departure from the militant cinema of the 1960s, I will also engage with current debates on the relationship between contemporary Latin American cinema, their Third Cinema status, political cinema and allegory.

In Chapter 4, my analysis of the Argentine film *Inheritance* (*Herencia*, Paula Hernández, 2001) and the Brazilian film *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* (*Cinema, aspirinas e urubus*, Marcelo Gomes, 2005) will focus on the presence of European immigrants in these films and their role in Argentine and Brazilian national narratives. I suggest that the presence of the foreigner emerges as a key reference for the reconstruction of Argentine and Brazilian national identity. This provides the basis for my argument in Chapters 5 and 6, which focus on the different migration waves from Europe to South America, and vice versa. Analysing the treatment of European

immigration in Argentine and Brazilian national narratives allows a better understanding of how contemporary films have negotiated changes in the traditional ways in which Argentina and Brazilian imagine themselves in the context of globalisation.

Chapter 5 shows how contemporary international coproductions from Argentina and Brazil speak to national concerns and simultaneously explore and undermine national identity and the notion of 'Europeanness'. Daniel Burman's *The Lost Embrace* (*El Abrazo Partido*, 2003) and Sandra Kogut's *The Hungarian Passport* (*Um Passaporte Húngaro*, 2001) chart the stories of Argentine and Brazilian diasporic subjects who claim their 'Europeanness' through their grandparents' history of displacement. In these films images of European embassies and documents such as passports, work permits, and visas are a persistent motif. Drawing on the work of Hamid Naficy (2001), I show that the cinematic representation of cultural identity in these two films problematises Eurocentric constructs of national identity and cinema.

Chapter 6 centres on the interface between international agreements and changing filmmaking practices in Argentina and Brazil and offers a critical view of the colonial legacy in contemporary cinema, which has included uneasy alliances involving coproduction schemes, in particular with their former colonisers Spain and Portugal. The chapter will focus on the films *Martín (Hache)* (Adolfo Aristarain, 1997), a coproduction between Argentina and Spain, and *Foreign Land*, one between Brazil and Portugal. The films are set both in South America and the Iberian Peninsula and engage with notions of supra-national identity, more precisely, Ibero-American and Lusophone identities. The former coloniser emerges as a point of reference for the Argentine and Brazilian subjects whose experiences of economic and political crisis led to the fragmentation of narratives of nationhood. I will argue that the films in question pose metacritical questions for their analysis as coproductions with Portugal and Spain, while revealing how discourses surrounding Lusophone and Ibero-American communities depend on the perpetuation of colonial discourses to construct a shared sense of identity.

In Chapter 7, the approach already applied in theorising the transnational dimension of Argentine and Brazilian cinemas is reconfigured in a discussion of the transnational as a regional phenomenon, reflecting the dimension of the regional trade pact of the Latin American Southern Cone, Mercosur. This chapter examines the ways that contemporary films – whose production Argentina and Brazil are involved in – portray borders within the region, and whether these representations re-affirm or challenge Mercosur integration efforts, by engaging with the notion of a Pan-Latin American identity and exposing ethnic and social tensions. Films selected for their representation of the Mercosur borders are *The Motorcycle Diaries* (Walter Salles, 2004), *The Rolling Family* (*Familia Rodante*, Pablo Trapero, 2004), *Lion's Den* (*Leonera*, Pablo Trapero, 2008) and *The Fish Child* (*El niño pez*, Lucía Puenzo, 2009). Attention is also drawn to *Bolivia* (Adrián Caetano, 2001), which does not portray physical/geographical borders as it is set solely in Buenos Aires, but engages with metaphorical borders within the Southern Cone region.

Finally, in my conclusion, the role of Argentine and Brazilian cinema within the respective national imaginaries is examined, both as cultural product and as a factor influencing the national self-image. The notions of national imaginary and national cinema are revisited in the light of my findings. My conclusion points to new directions for the analysis of Argentine and Brazilian cinema that go beyond the historical positioning of these countries, and their cultures, as dependent and marginal within a global system without neglecting the continued imbalance of power between countries.

Literature Survey

In this thesis an interdisciplinary approach is adopted which draws on sources from both within and outside film theory (in particular sociology and postcolonial studies). The conception of the nation first formulated in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006) is central to the argument. In addition, writings on current socio-political issues in Argentina, Brazil and Latin America in general, including articles and books such as Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler's *On Argentina and the Southern Cone* (2005) contribute to an understanding of the social background to the films. Furthermore,

this study is informed by literature in the field of cultural studies that deals with the relationship between culture and globalisation such as Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (1996), essays in the volume *Global Modernities* (edited by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson) and Nestór García Canclini's *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for entering and leaving modernity* (1995) and *La Globalización Imaginada* (1999).

One of the principal reasons for this study is that little comparative research has been conducted into the impact that globalisation and the subsequent erosion of the nation-state have had on Argentine and Brazilian cinemas since the early 1990s.⁵ This situation would appear to reflect the fact that the re-emergence of these two cinemas as well as the adoption of the current neoliberal economic system are recent phenomena. Those critics who have attempted to describe, categorise or analyse the major currents of these new cinemas have tended to focus on the cultural context of a single country, rarely comparing their findings with those reached elsewhere. For instance, *The New Brazilian Cinema* (2003) edited by Lúcia Nagib is the most comprehensive compilation of critical essays on Brazilian cinema in English to date and brings together the work of scholars that are not necessarily published in Anglophone literature on the subject. Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison's *Brazilian National Cinema* (2007) gives an up-to-date treatment of Brazilian cinema, whereas a collection of essays edited by Viviana Rangil, *El Cine Argentino De Hoy: Entre el Arte y la Política* (2007), Gonzalo Aguilar's book, *Other Worlds: New Argentinean Film* (2008), and Joanna Page's *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema* bring contemporary Argentine film into dialogue with issues of national identity and globalisation.

Studies of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema are often informed by past cinematic movements, particularly the New Latin American cinema of the 1960s. Books such as Randal Johnson and Robert Stam's *Brazilian Cinema, New Latin American Cinema* (1997), a two-volume compilation of key texts written about the

⁵ A publication entitled *New Trends in Argentine and Brazilian Cinema* (2010) edited by Carolina Rocha and Cacilda M. Rego provides surveys of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema.

movement edited by Michael T. Martin, and Ismail Xavier's *Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema* (1997) provide valuable insights into these two national cinemas' histories. Space does not permit consideration of all work on Argentine and Brazilian cinema here, but the titles of further studies may be found in the bibliography. Particularly worthy of attention is Volume VII of *Estudos de Cinema Socine*, a valuable collection of essays that has its origins in the annual conference held by the Brazilian Society of Audiovisual and Cinema Studies (Socine). The *Bulletin of Latin American Research* published on behalf of the Society of Latin American studies (SLAS) is no less important, as it presents up-to-date research articles on relevant issues in relation Latin American cultural studies.

As mentioned above, the Argentine and Brazilian film industries remain largely dependent on diverse forms of state support today, making it difficult to separate culture from politics. Works such as Randal Johnson's *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and State in Latin America* (1987) and the more recent studies *In the Belly of the Ogre: Cinema and State in Latin America* (1993) and *Film Policy in Latin America* (1996) shed useful light on the complex relationship between the state and the film industry in Latin America, especially in Brazil. Similarly, Tamara L. Falicov has explored the relationship between the Argentine film industry and politics from the studio system of the 1940s up until the contemporary film industry that emerged in the 1990s in *The Cinematic Tango: Contemporary Argentine Film* (2007). However, a detailed comparative analysis of the Argentine and Brazilian film industries and cultural policies has yet to emerge. One of the aims of this thesis is precisely to explore how film coproduction agreements have encouraged and indeed shaped the film texts that narrate Argentina and Brazil's experience of community building in the context of globalisation.

This thesis is especially informed by theories of transnational cinema, which have a lineage in postcolonial and globalisation theories. Publications on the contemporary transcultural landscape of world cinema are too numerous to detail here, so comments will be confined to a selection of key works that specifically establish a dialogue between film criticism and the issues of national cinema, multiculturalism and interculturality. In 'The Concept of National Cinema' (2002) and

'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema' (2000), Andrew Higson focuses on the national/transnational binary and explores the complex and contestable nature of the national cinema label. Given that the relationships of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas with European cinema remain underexplored, scholarship that focuses on exilic, diasporic or postcolonial filmmakers working within the West, such as Hamid Naficy's *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001) and Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000) are major contributions to the debate on decentred filmmaking practices and aesthetic formations that challenge fixed notions of national and cultural identities. In addition, *World Cinemas, Transnational Practices* (2010, edited by Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Newman) and *Film Festival Yearbook 2: Film Festivals and Imagined Communities* (2010, edited by Dina Iordanova and Ruby Cheung) offer original perspectives on issues relating to the reception of transnational films. Finally, the academic journal *Transnational Cinemas*, launched in 2010, focuses on ongoing debates concerning the shift from the national to the transnational within film studies.

Most of the recent literature on Latin American cinema that emphasises the transnational dimensions of filmmaking fails to account for the inequalities in transnational exchange and the public role of cinema. In assessing the role of films in shaping imagined communities, it is important to consider the relationship between culture and the public sphere. In fact, a close examination of the role of state policy and its impact on national production is vital to the understanding of Argentine and Brazilian films. The principal contribution of this thesis to the growing field of research on Latin American culture is to provide a comprehensive examination of recent filmic representations, thereby demonstrating how Argentine and Brazilian cinemas have registered, and indeed helped to construct, certain modes of subjectivity in relation to the experience of globalisation. Books such as *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (2002, edited by Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Loghod and Brian Larkin) and Toby Miller and George Yúdice's *Cultural Policy*, provide useful takes on culture's political and social concerns. Moreover, data has been compiled from the Argentine and Brazilian Ministries of Culture websites as well as from the database of RECAM (<http://www.recam.org>), Agência Nacional do Cinema da República Federativa do

Brasil (ANCINE) and Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales da República Argentina (INCAA).

Methodology

While film studies provide the core of this research project, its overall objectives and implications are, in fact, far broader. This is because it acknowledges that films are informed by and respond to the socio-political climate and conditions of production, which, in turn, feed into the actual themes and subject matter of the films. The filmic analysis will also take into account coproduction protocols and coproduction programmes that are likely to have influence on the representation of a specific community in the film texts selected for my specific case studies. Thus, analytical discussion of individual films serves as a point of departure for critical reflection on the function of cinema as a representation of and a cultural commentary on social reality. In this thesis, therefore, I will be looking at the ways in which films respond to the growing impact of globalisation on identities as well as the conditions of their production, and investigating how they reassert or contest traditional notions of centre and periphery that situate the country and its culture in the margins of capitalism. In other words, I will assess how the films selected for case study move away from aesthetics and themes that marked Third Cinema films and embrace global aesthetics and a transnational mode of production.

This thesis is a comparative study of the filmic construction of national identity in two very different societies with distinct histories and experiences of globalisation. The countries selected for this study are the two largest nations in South America, which have followed the pattern of political development that has predominated in Latin American history, including populism, militarism, and, more recently, neoliberalism. Furthermore, they are the co-founders of Mercosur which, although fundamentally based on economic agreements, has also stimulated other forms of integration, especially cultural integration, as discussed in Chapter 7. Broadly speaking, both countries have experienced similar macro socio-economic changes, and the legislation that transformed the Argentine and Brazilian film industries was, in both cases, enacted in the mid 1990s. In a similar manner, there are significant

thematic and formal convergences between these two national cinemas as argued throughout the thesis. Argentine and Brazilian cinema can therefore be taken together as a corpus of films charting issues relating to the adoption of the neoliberal economic model and its social and cultural consequences, in particular regarding discourses around the nation and its position in a changing global system.

The films which have been selected as case studies for detailed textual analysis date from the mid 1990s, when new film policies were implemented and clear aesthetic shifts took place. The selection of films reflects both filmic qualities and their pertinence to the issues discussed here. Moreover, most of the films selected for this study have been coproduced between two or more countries, and significant space is dedicated to those that have become widely associated with contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas. However, alongside films to which international audiences have access, others are included which have not travelled much outside Argentina and Brazil, owing to the nature of the market and, in particular, the difficulties encountered when trying to secure distribution deals with globally powerful companies. I contend that the selection of films provides a balanced sample of the range and diversity of the new cinemas. With the exception of Sandra Kogut's documentary, *The Hungarian Passport* (2001), which is analysed in Chapter 5, the material examined is restricted to fiction film. However, I will be arguing that one of the key characteristics of recent Argentine and Brazilian films is their capacity for observing and exploring reality by blurring the boundaries between fiction and the documentary.

The main interest of the analysis lies in the ways in which discourses pertaining to globalisation are expressed formally and stylistically in the films selected. Since the theme 'globalisation' is central in the organisation of my argument, choosing such an externally imposed perspective might overdetermine my readings of the films. For this reason, I have sought to balance contextual and formal readings of the films as well as showing some of their shared concerns with national and supra-national identities. In each chapter, a thematic introduction is followed by the analysis of selected films, including discussion of the political and historical background. The blend of textual and contextual analysis of the chosen films serves to demonstrate that despite their relationship with the international market they are

deeply rooted in national preoccupations. All the films examined, not merely those with a specific national focus (examined in Chapter 3), address national issues, yet they also transcend national borders by addressing local and global concerns.

Chapter 2. Literature review of globalisation and filmmaking in Argentina and Brazil

As established in my methodology, my filmic analysis seeks to show how the films construct identities at the aesthetic and narrative levels, and the socio-political relevance of the meanings constructed therein. As the purpose of this thesis is to investigate some of the impacts of globalisation on a body of Argentine and Brazilian films, analysing the case studies in isolation from their interactions with the global film market would lead to simplistic readings of the ways in which contemporary films have interrogated and articulated marginalised or globalised identities, both at a national (Chapter 3) and supra-national level (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7). While in my case studies (Chapter 3 to 7) I perform a close textual analysis, in this Chapter I will provide an overview of the current picture of filmmaking so as to shed light on the self-conscious ways films negotiate Argentina and Brazil's positions in a global system. In the first section of this Chapter, I will explore the complexity of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian filmmaking and their interaction within the global film market, while proposing a move away from the national/ transnational binary, by engaging with current scholarship on film studies. In the second part, I will continue focusing on the film market, but from a regional perspective. I will argue that Mercosur's agenda for filmmaking provides a better framework than the all-encompassing term 'Latin American' for the analysis of the relationship between Argentine and Brazilian film and regionalism. In the third and last part, I will define the key concepts of postcolonial theory and its significance for Argentine and Brazilian cinema especially in order to investigate the ways in which contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have drawn upon or refuted modes of representation that derive from the militant filmmaking of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, this section will present the main concepts that will function as analytical tools for my investigation of how contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films, in terms of production, narrative and aesthetics, have negotiated the countries' positioning in contemporary geopolitics.

A move away from the national and transnational binary

A transnational approach to film criticism is necessary to explore the position of Argentine and Brazilian national cinema within the global cinematic landscape, as it recognises both the increase in co-productions in Latin America and counter-hegemonic responses from the countries of the so-called 'Third World' (a highly contested term that will be furthered examined in the course of this thesis). The counter-hegemonic responses encompass the counter-flows of cultural products and decentring filmmaking activities such as diasporic and exilic filmmaking (key issues which will be addressed in detail in chapter 5). Transnational approaches to cinema are particularly appropriate to examine national cinemas in a globalised context characterised by the erosion of the nation-state, deregulation, economic internationalisation, the formation of regional blocs, and the increase in multilateral agreements, including cultural ones such as international film co-productions. However, while such approaches provide fresh understandings of the current situation of emerging economies, they tend to neglect the remaining importance of the cultural policies of nation-states, the public role of culture within a national context and the imbalances of transnational exchange such as US domination in the film industry. Therefore, I will investigate the limitations of this approach for the analysis of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, and explore the continuing significance of a critical focus on the nation in a globalised context.

Before exploring existing critical treatments of 'transnational cinemas' and elaborating the theoretical framework that this study will adopt, it is essential, first of all, to recognise that although transnational filmmaking practices have increased in a globalised context, they are far from new, as is shown by studies such as *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination: Set Design in 1930s European Cinema* (edited by Tim Bergfelder, Sue Harris, and Sarah Street, 2007) and *'Film Europe' and 'Film America': Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920-1939* (edited by Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby, 1999). In 'Transnational Developments in European Cinema in the 1920s', Higson states that 'transnational cinema is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, filmmaking and film exhibition have been transnational since the first public film shows in the 1890s' (2010:70). Secondly, the term 'transnational' has a homogenising role for, as Mette Hjort states in 'On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism', 'the term "transnational" does little to advance our thinking about important issues if it can mean anything and everything

that the occasion would appear to demand' (2010:12). In order to avoid such homogenising usage, this literature review will develop existing perspectives on the term 'transnational' and indicate how it will be employed in this thesis. The aim of this section is to highlight the problematic nature of the binary approach of national versus transnational, in order to develop a subtle and more flexible critical paradigm.

In the article 'Concepts of Transnational Cinema', Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim identify three main approaches to theorising transnational cinema: the first focuses on the national/ transnational binary, the second approach 'privileges an analysis of the transnational as a regional phenomenon', and the third approach relates to 'work on diasporic, exilic and postcolonial cinema' (2010: 9). In spite of this distinction, these approaches more often than not interweave, and thus one or more approach can be adopted at the same time. For instance, when addressing Argentine and Brazilian cinema as part of a regional phenomenon, issues relating to the national are also at stake. Similarly, the analysis of diasporic cinema may raise questions relating to regional and local phenomena, whose blurred distinctions allow notions of nation, nationalism and transnationalism to be continually questioned as ideological constructs.

In Argentina and Brazil, and Latin America more generally, the notion of 'nation' *per se* implies a complex identity-negotiation symptomatic of a history marked by colonisation, hybridity and migration. The use of nation as a framework for the analysis of the two focal cinemas does not necessarily assume that national identity and tradition are formed and fixed in place. In fact, a number of the trends that have emerged in the representation of the nation in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas portray the national community as fragmented and highly fluid. Drawing on Argentine sociologists such as Alejandro Grimson (2004) and Maristella Svampa (2006), Joanna Page, in her book *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema* (2009), emphasises the importance of a national framework in the analysis of Argentine film by explaining how nationalist discourses have been rearticulated, as a result of the crisis, as denunciations of 'the failure of the state' and resistance to the 'rhetoric of globalisation'. A number of scholars similarly suggest that Brazilian cinema continuously addresses national anxieties. For instance, Fernão Pessoa Ramos contends '[in] many films produced during the revival, one

can feel this bad conscience shifting away from issues of social fracture to accusations directed at the nation as a whole' (2003: 66). Therefore, nation remains an important framework for film analysis in a globalised context. In fact, while referring to national frameworks as 'limiting', Higson admits that it would be 'foolish' to preclude them entirely:

Given that the nation-state remains a vital and powerful legal mechanism, and given the ongoing development of national media policies, it remains important to conduct debate at that level and in those terms [...]. The implication of what I have argued so far is that the concept of national cinema is hardly able to do justice either to the internal diversity of contemporary cultural formations or to the overlaps and interpenetrations between different formations (2006: 20).

Indeed, given that international funding bodies such as Ibermedia, Fonds Sud Cinema, and the Hubert Bals Fund have made major contributions to the re-emergence of Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, it would be inappropriate to consider that films are bound by the limits of the nation-state. In fact, the Argentine and Brazilian cultural industries are not autonomous and producers are in constant negotiation with the US and European film industries. In her book *The Cinematic Tango: Contemporary Argentine film*, Tamara L. Falicov uses the tango, a key marker of Argentine identity, as a metaphor for the negotiations between contemporary Argentine cinema on the one hand, and the cinemas of Europe and the United States on the other:

Argentine cinema might be described as dancing a complicated tango, with the Hollywood film industry on one arm and European cinema on the other. While it is entangled with both partners, one more commercial, one more auteurist, it is a cinema that cannot be separated from its Latin American comrades, who are watching the awkward tango from the periphery of the dance floor (2007: 5).

Contemporary Brazilian cinema would appear to be caught up in a similar 'dance' with these two cinemas, and has often operated therefore on a transnational

basis. It is worth mentioning that Argentine and Brazilian cinema have a historically dialogued with both the US and European cinema (an issue addressed later in this chapter with regard to Third Cinema theory). It is in this context that Anne Marie Stock in 'Migrancy and the Latin American Cinemascape: towards a Post-National Critical Praxis' suggests that film production in Latin America has become increasingly transnational, and, indeed, that 'the time is right for a post-national criticism' (2006: 163). It is clear that while thinking of films exclusively as national texts is instrumental in marketing and promotion at film festivals, as well as in distinguishing categories at awards nominations, it is misleading when analysing films that involve coproduction practices. Nevertheless, the focus on the transnational part of Latin American cinema has, perhaps, naturalised neoliberal discourses and played down the public role of cinema, as Page argues:

Pronouncements made by critics of Latin American film concerning transnational production as the only, or principal, 'viable route' reflect something of the hegemony of neoliberal discourses, which have succeeded in presenting themselves as the only possible path for economic development (2009: 14).

In the neoliberal context, both the Argentine and Brazilian film industries have had to deal with the national and international marketplace and, thus, have had to compete with the market domination of US film production. It is awareness of this that leads Frederic Jameson to argue, in 'Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue', that 'the free movement of American movies sounds the death knell for national cinemas everywhere, or even for their existence as "distinct species"' (1998: 61). Nevertheless, cultural products such as Hollywood films tend to assume hybrid forms. As Néstor García Canclini (1995) has remarked, one of the strategies adopted by Latin American producers and filmmakers has been to appropriate Hollywood production values in films that embrace a popular commercial form of cinema. However, the appropriation of these values and the success of Latin American blockbusters have not necessarily guaranteed that Latin American national cinemas gain a significant share of their own domestic markets.

It is important to situate this ongoing debate in film studies, and cultural studies in general, within the wider debate on globalisation. On the one hand, theorists such as David Harvey (1990) and Jean Baudrillard (1981), who argue from a postmodernist perspective, stress that the commodification of culture has been accelerated by globalisation, while, on the other hand, Roland Robertson (2005) and Arjun Appadurai (1996) see globalisation as a process that is not homogenising as it opens up space for other cultures that were previously neglected. Both these perspectives will be explored below in relation to contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas. Robertson's notion of 'glocalisation', which mixes local languages and culture with global aesthetics, provides an important framework for 'world' cinemas, and many critics have written about the glocal aesthetics of recent Latin American films. For instance, Falicov explores the blockbuster movie phenomenon in Argentina, which started with the 'first Hollywood-style movie spoken in Spanish', *Cops* (*Comodines*, Jorge Nisco, 1997):

In terms of form and content, *Comodines* is a hybrid film in that the form is a global genre– that is, a television serial spin-off action film. The content however, while formulaic, utilises local language, actors and other local colour within a Hollywood narrative structure. (2007: 97)

Similarly, Deborah Shaw in 'Playing Hollywood at Its Own Game' focuses on the extraordinary success of the Argentine film *Nine Queens* (*Nueve reinas*, Fabián Bielinski, 2000), which is 'the only Argentine film to be remade in Hollywood' (2007: 67). Shaw argues that although *Nine Queens* is a Hollywood-style movie, as it adopts the crime thriller formula, the film nevertheless addresses distinctly national concerns such as the economic crisis. Drawing on the work of theorists of globalisation who question traditional notions of copying and originality, including, for instance, García Canclini (1995) and Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993), Shaw assesses whether *Nine Queens* is a paradigm of the 'Americanisation' of national cinemas or instead a hybrid cultural product that cannot be fitted into the 'model or copy formula':

The fact that the film has been remade in Hollywood also disrupts certain traditional understandings of the relationship between Latin American- and U.S.- dominated cultures. As the Chilean cultural theorist Nelly Richard has

argued, the paradigm of model or copy has been seen to define that relationship, with Latin American cultures felt to be reduced to copying the cultural products of hegemonic nations. Richard, critiquing this position, prefers to talk of Latin American 'cultural pastiche' (2007: 70).

The crossing of borders by Latin American directors is one of the elements currently changing domestic cinemas in Latin America in the context of the global-local dialectic. In particular, *The Motorcycle Diaries* – as I argue in Chapter 7 – provides a significant example of a Latin American film produced for both domestic markets and export. Moreover, as previously mentioned, since the 1990s, an increasing number of productions have adopted Hollywood formulas. The funding and production of such films were thoroughly transnational, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Peru, the United Kingdom and the United States (*The Motorcycle Diaries* had Robert Redford as its executive producer), whereas its themes are deeply regional. Indeed, it can actually be seen as a 'pan-American film' (Claire Williams, 2007: 11), as it was directed by a Brazilian filmmaker, written by a Puerto Rican scriptwriter, and features Mexican and Argentine actors. The film's marketing as a Latin American road movie draws on the success of Walter Salles's *Central Station* and Alfonso Cuarón's *And Your Mother Too* (*Y tu Mamá también*, 2002). Together with Salles and Cuarón, many Latin American directors have crossed borders when producing and making films, including, for instance, Argentine filmmaker Juan José Campanella, who directed a few episodes of the American TV series 'Law and Order', and Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Meirelles, director of the international coproductions *The Constant Gardener* (2005) and *Blindness* (2008). In challenging essentialist notions of nations, Stock problematises the concept of cultural authenticity in the context of contemporary multicultural collaborative practices. She suggests that it is necessary:

[...] to reframe Latin American Cinema in terms of presence rather absence, insisting that only by embracing the border crossing of film-makers, images and sounds, and audiences, will we as critics be positioned to move beyond 'the genealogical rhetoric of blood, property and frontiers' (Carter, 1992: 7-8) and to make sense of post-national cultural expression (2006: 158).

For instance, while *The Motorcycle Diaries* is an auteur film directed by Walter Salles, it is also a genre film that seeks to capitalise on the recent popularity of Latin American films among European and North American audiences. Categorising the film according to its nationality becomes even more problematic when financing, production and casting are considered alongside with narrative themes. Within this understanding, its prestige is not linked to authenticity of representation, for the film is a product of a transnational collaboration that brings together filmmakers of different nationalities and can be read in different ways by spectators in different countries. *The Motorcycle Diaries* was based on Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's memoir *Diarios de Motocicleta* (*Motorcycle Diaries*) and features not only the most celebrated Mexican actor today, Gael García Bernal, playing the role of the Argentine guerrilla leader Che Guevara, and famous Argentine actors, such as Rodrigo de la Serna and Mía Maestro, but also the first song in the Spanish language to win an Academy Award, 'Al otro lado del Río' by the Uruguayan Jorge Drexler. As the film charts the journey of Guevara, whose ideas of liberation depended on the notion of an integrated Latin America, the theme of the film covers not merely one specific Latin American nation, but the whole subcontinent.

However, important though they are, Latin American blockbusters such as *Motorcycle Diaries* and *Nine Queens* are not really representative of the current situation of this continent's national cinemas. According to Page the overwhelming critical concentration on international commercial successes such as *Central Station* (Brazil, 1998), *Love's a Bitch* (*Amores perros*, Mexico, 2000), *And Your Mother Too* (Mexico, 2001) and *City of God* (Brazil, 2002), has 'the unfortunate effect of casting into shadow many other films of merit and drawing a veil over the inequalities of production and distribution that have prevented their greater visibility' (2009:10). Indeed, the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA) along with aggressive U.S. distribution practices in Latin America have often hindered national productions, and crowded out non-Hollywood cinema, including European and the so-called 'world' cinemas.

In asserting that international film coproductions 'enjoy a position of dominance in the literature that they do not actually occupy in national production across the continent' (2009: 12), Page criticises Michael Chanan's reference to 'the

foreign coproducer, without whom, in Argentina, few films are nowadays made' (Chanan in Page 2009: 12) and argues that current figures simply do not justify such claims, since international coproductions account for a mere 23% of Argentine films on general release in the country between 1995 and 2006 (2009: 12). Similarly, the statistics for international coproductions released in Brazil are fairly unimpressive: the 45 international coproductions involving Brazil between 1995 and 2006 represent only 12% of national films screened commercially in that country.⁶ The evidence that contemporary theory and practice may be contradicting each other has important implications for the analysis of recent Argentine and Brazilian cinema, given that their re-emergence has been accompanied by enhanced state support. If this fact is ignored, it will lead to invalid claims regarding the relationship between film studies and film policy in the countries in question, thereby downplaying the public role of cinema.

Although the purpose of this thesis is to show the ways in which national cinema is instrumental in creating 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983), national production performs poorly in the Argentine and Brazilian domestic markets. More specifically, the statistics provided by RECAM show that in 2007, 90 out of the 281 (32%) films screened in Argentina were national productions, whilst in Brazil the equivalent figures were 78 out of 333 (23.4%).⁷ This scenario is symptomatic of two main forces that affect national cinema markets in Latin America: the social inequalities that lead to constraints in terms of the size of the potential film audience and hence the number of cinemas and the US film industry's domination. Randal Johnson's argument that 'any discussion of film policy in Latin America must be set within the context of the US film industry's historical domination of national markets' (1996: 131) also finds an echo in Falicov's statement:

Exhibitors throughout the Southern Cone are prone to show U.S. film fare because it is generally a less risky option. Because exhibition chains are profit-making enterprises and have no stake in screening national fare over foreign material, they generally are financially 'on the safe side'. This typically

⁶ Data compiled from www.ancine.gov.br (accessed 4 December 2009).

⁷ Data compiled from <http://www.recam.org> (accessed 7 May 2010).

results in discrimination for national distributors, unless the Latin American director has name recognition (2002: 7).

In Falicov's scenario, therefore, it is essential to recognise the importance of the state in guaranteeing that more experimental films, offering diverse viewpoints on national identity, continue to have a space in the profit-driven world of globalised film markets. The dependence on state support remains one of the main arguments for the retention of a national framework for the analysis of Argentine and Brazilian cinemas. In this regard, Randal Johnson in 'Film Policy in Latin America' contends that '[i]n Latin America, periods of success, however relative, have by and large been accompanied by considerable state support' (1996: 133) and emphasises how the specificities of the national context shape film policies: 'cultural policies in different national settings by necessity vary according to the set of cultural and social values at stake' (1996: 134). Given that Argentine and Brazilian cinema remain subject to governmental intervention and support, the analysis of statistics which are often provided by the official websites of government bodies, such as the Argentine INCAA, the Brazilian Ministry of Culture, and OMA (Observatorio Mercosur Audiovisual), plays a vital role in understanding the complexity of the relationship between nation, state and filmmaking.

Whilst this thesis acknowledges both the imbalance of global flows in the trade between the USA and Latin America in audiovisual products and important issues regarding the counter-hegemonic responses to the dominance of the US film industry, nevertheless, its main focus is upon the dialogue between Argentine/Brazilian and European cinemas. The decision to prioritise this focus is justified by recent coproduction agreements with Europe, migration fluxes from Latin America to Europe and vice versa, and the colonial heritage that has led to the construction of a community based on shared languages, history and culture. Two major examples of coproduction agreements that rely on the colonial legacy in order to create discourses of a supra-national community are the *Programa Ibermedia* which involves Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the *Acordo de Co-Produção Cinematográfica Luso-Brasileiro*, involving Brazil and Portugal. Nevertheless, the discourses present

in these agreements are often criticised for neglecting the historical tension between the countries involved.

In *Transnational Financial Structures in the Cinema of Latin America: Programa Ibermedia in Study* (2009), Libia Villazana, one of the few critics to point out the imbalances of power in contemporary film coproductions between Latin America and Europe, draws on her own experiences as a filmmaker in Peru to analyse the interface between politics and filmmaking in relation to the neo-colonial discourses involving coproductions between Spain and Latin American countries. In her article 'Hegemony Conditions in the Coproduction Cinema of Latin America: The Role of Spain' (2008), Villazana argues that the problems relating to coproduction practices between the Spanish Ibermedia programme and Latin American countries are two-fold. Firstly, they perpetuate neo-colonialist practices and impose values of production that the Latin American filmmaker, the 'postcolonial' subject, in Villazana's terms, has little option but to accept. Secondly, these neo-colonial practices have imposed ideologies and aesthetics that have undermined the value of the film as cultural expression. An example that stands out is the presence of Spanish actors, whose presence is highlighted by their distinctive accent, a factor which requires adjustments to the original script in order to justify their position in the narrative (2008: 73).

With precisely this consideration in mind, Carolin Overhoff Ferreira argues in 'Monólogos lusófonos ou diálogos trans-nacionais: O caso das adaptações luso-brasileiras' (2008) that the Luso-Brazilian film coproduction protocol celebrates a 'Lusophone Imaginary', which is that of a supra-national community formed primarily at a linguistic level, whilst ignoring cultural differences and colonial tensions between Portugal and Brazil. Similarly, the Spanish programme Ibermedia has played an important role in fostering cinema production in Latin America since the 1990s through the promotion of the idea of an Ibero-American community. In this context, it is surprising that the relationship between transnational filmmaking involving Europe and Latin America, the colonial legacy, and the shifting migration flows from and to Europe that have marked the histories of both the European countries involved and Argentine and Brazilian history, remain relatively unexplored. This issue will be explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, as in the context of the economic crisis, films have

portrayed the migration of Argentine and Brazilian citizens of European descent to Europe.

The regional dimension: Latin American cinema in transition

Regional approaches to film studies have also shown how cinemas have been understood as a 'transnational' phenomenon in contemporary literature. For instance, Trevor G. Elkington and Andrew Nestingen's *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition* (2005) and Leon Hunt and Leung Wing-Fai's *East Asian Cinemas: Exploring Transnational Connections on Film* (2008) examine national cinemas within a geographical framework. Within the discipline of film studies, the concept of Latin American cinema is a well-established area of enquiry, as is revealed by the increasing number of book titles in Anglophone scholarship devoted to this area, for example: *A Companion to Latin American Film* (Stephen M. Hart, 2004), *Latin American Cinema: Essays on Modernity, Gender and National Identity* (Lisa Shaw, 2005), *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market* (Deborah Shaw, 2007) and *Latsploitation, Latin America, and Exploitation Cinema* (Ruétalo and Tierney, 2009). Whilst it is clear that the notion of a 'Latin America cinema' has a referential scope that helps to create space for films from that region in an increasingly globalised film market, the use of this all-encompassing category in published works in general has rendered films from some Latin American nations invisible, given that 'Latin American' embraces the national cinemas of 20 countries,⁸ which, in general, are more interesting because of their differences than their similarities. Recognising this fact, this study suggests that the term 'Latin America' is problematic because it takes almost no account of the variety of cultures and local specificities it encompasses. Nevertheless, the term is employed throughout the thesis as a means of engaging with and interrogating the notion of 'Latin America' and its historically attributed 'third world' status. It is clear that the term reflects the fact that the official languages spoken in these countries derive from Romance languages. However, it is most likely that the term was not coined by

⁸ The number of Latin American countries varies according to different definitions. Here the term is taken as meaning a region in the American continent that encompasses countries whose official languages are Romance languages.

people from the region and, thus, has a Eurocentric character that critics must recognise. In his seminal work on postcolonial studies, *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said argues how the 'Orient' was treated as a 'given':

[...] the Orient is not an inert fact of nature [...] The Orient was Orientalised not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be* – that is, submitted to being – *made Oriental* ' (1978: 4-6).

It is possible that Said's argument above could be applied to the usage of the term 'Latin America', as in scholarship the term is less challenged than naturalised. Conversely, Mercosur/Mercosul was an Argentine and Brazilian initiative and, thus, can be seen as more legitimate than the term 'Latin America'. Since its creation in 1991, when post-dictatorship Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay signed the Treaty of Asunción, Mercosur members have mobilised discourses around regional integration, stressing the need to strengthen regional identity. In 1996, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru gained associate member status, a development which allowed these countries to join free trade agreements, although they remained outside the bloc's customs union. The creation of Mercosur is often associated with Argentine and Brazilian adoption of the neoliberal economic model and the countries' experience of globalisation. For the reasons outlined above, when assessing how Argentine and Brazilian films have negotiated regional identity in the context of globalisation, I prefer to focus on discourses involving the sub-regional integration led by Mercosur, the Common Market of the South, which has its own cultural-political agenda and aims to strengthen national cinemas through regional integration.

The creation of Mercosur followed two models of supra-national integration: that of the North American Free Trade agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Mexico and Canada, and that of the European Union (EU) (Galperin, 1999). Given the importance of culture to the process of regional integration intensified by globalisation, leading theorists in Latin American cultural studies, Manuel Antonio Garretón, Jesús Martín-Barbero, Marcelo Cavarozzi, Néstor García Canclini, Guadalupe Ruiz-Giménez and Rodolfo Stavenhagen collaborated in writing a book

entitled *El espacio cultural latinoamericano. Bases para una política cultural de integración* (2003). According to one of the authors of this book, García Canclini, the notion of a Latin American cultural space should include not only Latin American territory, but also the 'millions of Latin Americans who emigrated to the United States, Spain and other countries'.⁹ In this context, Garretón argues that in order to create a Latin American cultural space, it is necessary to displace exclusively economic logic:

To state that Latin America is a cultural space is far from being an arbitrary invention or a voluntary gesture, given that there are many features that are a part of what we can call 'the patrimony of this space' which go beyond the geographic dimension. For example, the language, certain historical landmarks which were experienced by all the countries of the region, the deficit in instrumental rationality, and the role of the State that formed our societies.¹⁰

In 1996, a protocol was adopted to provide the legal framework for cultural integration within the bloc, and one of its most recent initiatives was the creation of the Mercosur cultural seal, which was introduced in 2009 in order to allow free circulation of goods destined for exhibition at cultural events. However, the protocol has been heavily criticised by many scholars. For example, Martín-Barbero (2000) points out that it prioritises an elitist notion of culture as the fine arts, that is to say, of cultural products consumed by an educated minority (painting, literature, and performance, for example), thereby neglecting the audiovisual industries and the bulk of mass media originating in the private sector. Similarly, Miller and Yúdice argue that Mercosur's cultural efforts have 'concentrated on the arts, for elite showcasing, and on communications, from a business perspective, leaving aside other forms of

⁹ La noción de espacio cultural latinoamericano abre, asimismo, el territorio llamado América Latina a los millones de latinoamericanos que migraron a los Estados Unidos, España y otros países (García-Canclini, 2005). Available at: <http://www.comminit.com/infancia/node/195442> (accessed 28 November 2011).

¹⁰ Afirmar a América Latina como espacio cultural está muy lejos de ser un invento arbitrario o un gesto voluntarista, puesto que hay muchos rasgos que ya forman parte de lo que hoy podríamos llamar el patrimonio de este espacio, más allá de la dimensión geográfica. Por ejemplo, la lengua, ciertos hitos históricos que prácticamente todo el conjunto de países de la región ha vivido, el déficit de racionalidad instrumental, el papel del Estado y la política en la conformación de nuestras sociedades (Garretón, 2003). Available at: <http://www.revistatodavia.com.ar/todavia21/6.garretonnota.html> (accessed 7 June 2010).

cultural expression' (2002: 178). According to Galperin (1999), it is precisely because of this disregard for culture produced by the private sector that previous regional integration initiatives in the audiovisual sector have failed in Latin America.

A number of scholars have argued that the failure to include the audiovisual industries in Mercosur's cultural policies reflects the lack of political will to do so. For whilst Eva Piwowarski, head of the Mercosur department of the Argentine National Institute for Film and Audiovisual (INCAA), acknowledges that 'cinema cannot be separated from political will' (Piwowarski in Rubim, 2007), in *Mercosur: Estado, economía, comunicación y cultura*, Facundo Solanas and Mariana Vasquez argue that 'although the technology exists to produce "a Mercosur audiovisual space," in this moment there doesn't seem to be the political will to move this space forward' (Solanas and Vasquez in Falicov, 2002: 41). Nevertheless, Falicov ponders 'despite this lack of official acknowledgment, there has been concerted effort by municipal and federal governments to address this issue and facilitate integration on the cultural level', and according to this author these efforts are twofold:

The primary goals are first that the national film industries create a common market for trade and circulation of their products to encourage the economic viability of audiovisual production in the region; and second, that national film industries work alongside governmental bodies to move toward the creation of a regional identity that is expressed both culturally and cinematically (2002: 3).

It was to these ends that RECAM (Reunión Especializada de Autoridades Cinematográficas y Audiovisuales del Mercosur), an institutional body that promotes integration amongst the film and audiovisual industries of the region, was created in 2003. More specifically, through this organisation's cultural integration proposal of 2005, the aim became the creation of a cinema market by dint of measures such as producing a system to certify the nationality of Mercosur products and establishing a regional screen quota, as well as promoting free circulation of film copies. Further, RECAM's establishment was based on three principles: reciprocity, complementarity

and solidarity.¹¹ Since Mercosur's main strategy is to compete effectively in the global market that is currently dominated by the north (as expressed in the motto 'Our North is the South'), Mercosur film policy makers have recognised the importance of promoting a network of cross-border film co-operation if they are to challenge Hollywood's dominance in national markets.

To this end, the Mercosur Film Market (MFM) was established, which was particularly aimed at the rapidly growing Chinese and Indian markets. Considered by Villazana (2007) as one of the most successful and consolidated models of integration in the region, the MFM is organised by the Mar del Plata film festival, INCAA and RECAM. The creation of this space is an attempt to meet the needs of member countries in regard to the exhibition and distribution sectors, and such a focus is, according to Villazana a 'novelty', because public policies in Latin America, more often than not, have prioritised the production sector over all others. Furthermore, the MFM is an initiative created by Latin American countries and to date it has been controlled exclusively by them. However, as Villazana (op. cit.) points out, the main problem regarding this initiative is that it is more dependent on INCAA, a single institution, than on Mercosur itself.

In regard to Mercosur's 'industrial profile', defined by Galperin as the 'distribution of economic and political resources among the trading partners' (1999: 627), critical studies of the audiovisual industries tend to point out the power imbalances that exist between Argentina and Brazil, on the one hand, and Uruguay and Paraguay on the other. Many scholars also would appear to concur with the notion that one of the main challenges regarding the regional integration of the film industries relates to the economic asymmetries found in the region. For example, in her study of the relationship between the Uruguayan film industry and Mercosur, Falicov stresses that 'Uruguay realises that it has some catching up to do before it can realistically work with other Mercosur member countries that have well-developed film industries, namely Argentina and Brazil' (2002: 9). This imbalance is largely due to the fact that Uruguay and Paraguay are smaller countries, and thus, have a smaller internal market than Argentina and Brazil. In reality, the imbalance of

¹¹ See '¿Qué es la RECAM?'. Available at: <http://www.recam.org/?do=recam> (accessed 09 October 2010).

power exists not only between countries, but also between regions within the national territory for, as Miller and Yúdice (2002) note, the Brazilian Amazon and north-east and the Argentine South are not particularly active in Mercosur.

Another issue concerning Mercosur is the democratisation of cinema both as a commodity and as a means of artistic expression. In their article 'A indústria cinematográfica no Mercosul: economia, cultura e integração', César R. S. Bolaño, Cristina A. dos Santos and José M. Domingues (2006) point out that whilst integration policies talk about 'diversity of voices, contents and formats in cinematic production, its consumption is, instead, taking place in an increasingly limited space, usually delimited by the shopping mall'.¹² Indeed, the reality is that since the late 1990s, cinema-going in Argentina and Brazil has been dominated by the presence of megaplexes that are usually located in shopping malls in the main urban centres, partly justified by the lack of security elsewhere, as the middle-class visitors can be protected by the armed security guards that usually patrol such areas.

As an obvious consequence of their middle-class orientation, those cinemas exclude the poorer members of the population. There are 27 Federative Unities in Brazil, and in 4 of them are less than 10 cinema screens.¹³ By way of comparison, according to the UK Film Council statistical yearbook, there were 3,610 screens in the UK in 2009,¹⁴ whereas in Brazil in 2010 there were 2,206,¹⁵ and given that the population in Brazil is three times that of Britain, it is clearly apparent that the level of access to cinemas in Brazil is a comparatively major problem. Ironically, the logic of capitalism is that it requires the development of an internal market, but poor income distribution is stifling this development and were these matters to be addressed effectively this would lead to the democratisation of the national cinema. Gustavo

¹² '[...] políticas de integração, que falam em diversidade de vozes, conteúdos e formatos na produção cinematográfica, quando, pelo contrário, o consumo dessa produção se dá num contexto cada vez mais determinado e limitado pelo entorno comercial dos shoppings'. (2006: 25).

¹³ Data compiled from <http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/SAM/2010/SalasExibicao/208.pdf> (accessed 13 March 2011).

¹⁴ UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2009, p.74. Available at: <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/media/pdf/2/p/2009.pdf> (accessed 20 March 2011).

¹⁵ Data compiled from <http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/SAM/2010/SalasExibicao/208.pdf> (accessed 13 March 2011).

Dahl, an Argentine born filmmaker, naturalised Brazilian, and former president of the Brazilian National Cinema Agency (ANCINE), suggests that in order to enhance the national cinema's market share it is necessary to 'de-elitise' it, for 'Brazilians go to the cinema once every two years. However, research carried out by the exhibition sector show that, in reality, ten million Brazilians go to the cinema eight times a year'.¹⁶ With this in mind, film consumption needs to be understood not only as a leisure activity, but also as a social practice.

Given the middle-class nature of film making and consumption in Argentina and Brazil, the question of who controls the filmic representations of imagined communities problematises confidence in the democracy of self-representation and the ethics relating to the representation of a community. In assessing the role of films in shaping imagined communities, it is important to recognise that they are not merely a commodity, but an important means of expression of identity and cultural diversity. For this reason, this study seeks to include films that engage with cultural diversity within a country, region, or diasporic or linguistic group in order to interrogate the articulations of 'imagined communities'.

The economic and social disparities between regions within the Southern Cone hinder regional integration and undermine discourses around 'regionness', in Fawcett's terms (2004), and, as a consequence, the rhetoric of Mercosur. The connotations given by some recent films to the cross-border experience within the Southern cone, and the meaning of the border that has been assumed to support such interpretations, can be considered as a form of expression of a socio-political discourse pertaining to regional integration. Border-crossing within the Southern cone region has become a persistent motif in many contemporary Latin American films that reflected the changes of the imagined space of the region as well as the redefinition of political borders. Therefore, Chapter 7 will assess how a selected body of films have negotiated socio-cultural conflicts and cultural diversity within this region.

¹⁶ É evidente que a perversa concentração restringe o número de salas e espectadores. Tomados em conjunto, os brasileiros vão uma vez ao cinema a cada dois anos. Mas as pesquisas feitas pelo exibidores confirmam que, na verdade, dez milhões de brasileiros freqüentam as salas oito vezes por ano (Dahl, 2002). Available at http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/LEITURAS/arte_ou_industria.pdf (accessed 3 January 2010).

Argentine and Brazilian national cinema and their 'Third World' status in a global era

I have already mentioned that one of the aims of the thesis is to contribute to the debate on how films have testified to, and, perhaps, served as evidence of the current repositioning of Argentina and Brazil in the global system. Nonetheless, before analysing how contemporary films have dealt with emerging globalised and decentred identities, it will be useful to provide an overview of the principal literature, heavily influenced by colonial discourses, that engages with notions of the centre and periphery of capitalism, including for instance, the use of 'Third World' to refer to these countries and its relevance to Argentine and Brazilian cinematic traditions, in particular Third Cinema. It is vital to understand this relationship in order to contribute to the understanding of how Argentine and Brazilian contemporary cinema have perpetuated or challenged some of these discourses. Most of the literature on Argentine and Brazilian cinema engages in one way or another with Third Cinema theory, and as Randal Johnson asserts, '[a]s a central part of Brazilian film history, *Cinema Novo* is an obligatory point of reference in any discussion of modern cinema in Brazil' (2006: 118). In addition, filmmakers such as the Argentinian Fernando 'Pino' Solanas (one of the leaders of the *Cine Liberación*), and *Cinema Novo* veterans including Eduardo Coutinho, Cacá Diegues, Ruy Guerra and Nelson Pereira do Santos, continue to be active in filmmaking.

The name Third Cinema, according to Hayward, 'emanated from countries and continents outside the two dominant spheres of power: the Western (first world) and the Eastern (second world) super-power blocks' as well as functioning as 'a riposte to economists (who have carved the world up in this way) and to dominant Western cinemas' (2006: 414). She suggests the theory emerged when notions of first world versus second world still existed because of the context of the Cold War. In *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film*, Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim state that 'the first thing to note about the concept of world cinema is its situatedness: it is, in this book at least, the world as viewed from the West' (2006: 1). Here, the question of whether Latin America is in 'the West' is

raised because the continent is situated in the western hemisphere, but by no means belongs to those countries termed 'the West' in much literature. Moreover, Mercosur has the motto 'Our North is the South', which implies a South American perspective in which the hegemonic countries are associated more with the 'North' than the 'West'. In reality, in the eyes of these countries the split lies between the north and south. In the light of this difficulty, in this study the dualism will be described as one of capitalist centre and periphery. The shift to this distinction caters for the fact that in a globalised world the concept of 'West' is becoming increasingly problematic, because uneven development is leading to substantial social and economic inequality within every nation. Therefore, globalisation is here understood as an uneven process that opens space for previously neglected cultural perspectives and liminal filmmaking activities, including for instance 'accented' filmmaking, in Naficy's terms (2001). Naficy suggests that accented cinema, which he considers an offspring of Third Cinema, is a result of decentred filmmaking practices that often emerged when filmmakers are inserted in an exilic and diasporic context. However, instead of using underdevelopment as an allegory as do the films of Third Cinema, accented cinema transforms the very experience of displacement into allegories (an argument I advance in Chapter 5).

Although recent Argentine and Brazilian films do not possess the aesthetic and political radicalism of the earlier movement (as I argue in Chapter 3), the cinema that has emerged in the two countries since the early 1990s is often analysed against the background of Third Cinema without considering that, perhaps, traditional modes of analysis with respect to political cinema have been modified in a post-dictatorship and globalised context. Labelling contemporary cinema as depoliticised in comparison to the new waves of the 1960s overlooks the on-going reconfiguration of the centre-periphery relationship established by colonisation both within and outwith national boundaries. Moreover, the claimed emergence of a 'multipolar world', or 'dispersed hegemonies' in (Appadurai, 1990) in opposition to a world divided into three, has changed traditional modes of analysis with respect to political cinema. On this point, Ella Shohat argues that the '[t]hree-worlds theory not only flattens heterogeneities, masks contradictions, and elides differences, but also obscures similarities' (2006: 42). Postcolonial theory has articulated some of the issues relating to Third Cinema. The term 'postcolonialism' covers a wide range of issues, and even

the choice of spelling is significant since 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonial' have slightly different meanings. According to Hayward, the hyphenated term 'post-colonial' refers to:

[...] the historical concept of the post-colonial state (it refers then to the period after official decolonisation... [whilst 'postcolonial']... refers to varying practices that in some way are influenced by or relate to the post-colonial moment. Thus postcolonial refers to theory, literature, cultural practices in general, to ways of reading these different cultural practices (2006: 293).

Similarly, John McLeod states that the term 'postcolonialism' will be understood in his book 'not just in terms of strict historical periodisation, but as referring to disparate forms of *representations, reading practices and values*' (2000: 5). Unlike 'post-colonialism', according to McLeod, the term 'postcolonialism' is not equivalent to 'after colonialism' as it does not define a new era in which problems symptomatic of the colonial past are no longer existent. Instead, the author argues that 'postcolonialism recognises both historical *continuity* and *change*' (2000: 33). In other words, postcolonialism both recognises the remaining existence of modes of representation common to colonialism in contemporary society and acknowledges the possibility of change. Another relevant terminological distinction is that between 'colonialism' and 'imperialism'. Although colonialism can be understood as a form of practice symptomatic of imperialism, it specifically addresses the physical and geographical occupation of a territory by a group of people, whilst imperialism does not necessarily involve physical settlement. In relation to this, McLeod asserts that the age of colonialism is virtually over, while 'imperialism continues apace, as Western nations such as America are still engaged in imperial acts, securing wealth and power through the continuing economic exploitation of other nations' (2000: 8). In fact, some of the anti-colonial thrust that marked the Latin American cinematic avant-garde in the 1960s addressed less Spain or Portugal, their former colonisers, than the USA and its neo-colonial practices in Latin America. For instance, Ismail Xavier, one of the key film scholars of new Latin American cinema, argues that *Cinema Novo* and Marginal Cinema in Brazil were 'the first to give a more effective response to the "colonial condition" of the cinema itself: lack of resources and an unfavourable position in a domestic market ruled by Hollywood' (1997: 9).

Following the making of Grupo Cine Liberación's *The Hour of the Furnaces* (*La hora de los hornos*, 1968), Solanas and Getino, two of the group's filmmakers, wrote the manifesto 'Towards a Third Cinema' (first published in 1969). In the manifesto, they argued for a revolutionary Latin American cinema that not only differs from Hollywood cinema (First Cinema), but also from European Art Cinema (Second Cinema). In contrast to 'Second Cinema', the European art cinema that, for them, remained bourgeois, Third Cinema is, according to Hayward, 'ostensibly political in its conceptualisation since it seeks to promote the cause of socialism' (2006: 415). This distinction was famously enacted in the crossroads sequence in the 1970 Godard/Dziga Vertov Group film *Wind from the East* (*Vent d'Est*), which features Glauber Rocha pointing to a direction while continuously describing Third Cinema. The distinctive terms on which the notion of Third Cinema built were Julio García Espinosa's 'imperfect cinema' and Rocha's 'aesthetic of hunger'. While the former suggested that film document 'reality' in an 'imperfect' form (low-budget, gritty, rough), the latter is described by Xavier in the following terms:

[...] the production of extremely low-budget politicised films taking an aggressive stance toward the dominant cinematic codes. The overall demands of the modern European *cinéma d'auteur* — the denial of technical constraints, production values, and narrative codes — acquired, in Brazil, an anticolonialist thrust. (1997:1)

The theories that informed the New Cinemas of the 1960s engendered a significant affirmation of the national cinemas of Latin America. This is due to anti-colonialist thinking which aimed at promoting the consolidation of national culture in order to subvert modes of perception and representation established through colonisation. Together with Aimé Césaire and Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon was among the central figures who influenced Latin American anti-colonialist thought in the 1950s and 1960s. Fanon, a native of the French colony of Martinique, drew on his own experiences in France to articulate the mechanisms of the formation of the identity of a colonised subject, who, according to him, is regarded as an *object* by those who are in a position of power. His influence was clear in Grupo Cine

Liberación's seminal film, *La Hora de los hornos*, which quotes from the work of Fanon. Likewise, film scholars relate the *Cinema Novo* movement to the national liberation and anti-colonial thinking articulated by Fanon. For instance, Ismail Xavier, in an introductory note in the book *Glauber Rocha, Revolução do Cinema Novo* (2004), identifies Fanon's influence on Rocha's writing, and Robert Stam and Randal Johnson (1995) assert that the tone of Rocha's manifesto 'An Aesthetic of Hunger' recalls Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon asserted that 'to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible' (1968: 233).

According to Fanon, it is necessary to create a distinct national culture, as national consciousness and national culture are inseparable from each other and anti-colonial resistance cannot succeed without them: 'National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon' (1968: 35). This Fanonian notion of nation as the focal point for anti-colonial resistance is echoed in Xavier's description of *Cinema Novo* as 'a cinema in which the issues of class, race, and gender were subordinate to the national question' (1997: 8). In his essay 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness', Fanon indicated the problematic location of those who occupy positions of power in a colonised nation, including intellectuals and artists. Fanon's native intellectual has to face a twofold challenge: create a distinctly national culture without neglecting the natives of their country. It has always been a challenge for both Argentine and Brazilian artists to distinguish their work from European traditions and North American cultural products. The attempt to copy dominant artistic trends has been historically criticised by many Brazilian cinema scholars including, for example, Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes:

We are neither Europeans nor North Americans. Lacking an original culture, nothing is foreign to us because everything is. The painful construction of ourselves develops within the rarified dialectic of not being and being something else. Brazilian film participates in this mechanism and alters it

through our creative incapacity for copying (Salles Gomes in Johnson and Stam 1995: 245).

The need to modify, reinterpret and reform traditional culture in order to struggle for independence as suggested by Fanon was first articulated by the Brazilian modernist movement in literature and the arts in the 1920s, and finally reached the cinema with *Cinema Novo* in the 1960s. This was already the context within which Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade articulated 'cannibalism' as an anti-colonialist metaphor, by coining the term 'anthropophagia' in the 1920s and its famous slogan "Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question", i.e. whether Brazilian intellectuals should 'go native' by symbolically imitating the putatively cannibalistic *Tupinambás* or alienate themselves into European domination' (Stam 2003, 211). The modernist movement also critically examined the ways in which representation and modes of perception contribute to the continuing assertion of colonial power. These processes of 'de-Cabralisation' and 'de-Vespucciasation' resemble the 'de-colonisation of the mind' urged by anti-colonialists. However, Fanon could foresee a problem common to intellectuals from colonised nations, or the 'native intellectual', in his terms. The native intellectual tends to identify with the national middle-class, which, according to Fanon, 'is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country' (1968: 149). Arguably, this identification with the dominant culture remains a contemporary issue, as the colonised elite class to which the filmmaker belongs tends to mimic what the American and European cinemas have already done. Hayward argues that Third World Cinema 'is treated as if it were the subaltern, the shadow cinema of the "real" cinema of America and Europe' (2006: 371). This argument seems to resonate in Falicov's explanation of the emergence of Argentine *Nueva Ola*, which is the 'New Wave of cinema', as she argues that during this period:

[t]he concept of art-house film developed alongside the entrance of European auteur films in Argentina. While they were not recognised as important either aesthetically or at the box-office, they later became emblematic of the nation's cultural patrimony, primarily because many of these films were based on national 'Europeanised' writers such as Julio Cortázar and Jorge Luis

Borges. This was due to Argentina's middle — to upper — class urban collective desire to be European (2007: 7).

Ironically, those modernists often considered the precursors of anti-colonial thought in both Argentina, as is the case with Borges, and Brazil, tended to be members of bourgeois 'Europeanised' cultural circles in their country. Given this close relationship between European culture and national elite, Third Cinema tried to differentiate itself from the *cinéma d'auteur*, which Solanas and Getino referred to as a 'second cinema', in order to create a more grass-roots cultural movement. Nonetheless, the impact that *Cinema Novo* had on the life of the lower classes, according to Brazilian filmmakers Joaquim Pedro de Andrade and Alex Vianny, was questionable, as its use of allegories and sophisticated ideas was often not understood by working-class audiences (Andrade and Vianny in Johnson and Stam: 1995). This still remains an issue in debates on the democratisation of Brazilian cinema. Such a re-evaluation brought about the debate on the democratisation of Brazilian art which burst onto the cultural scene in 1967-68 with the Tropicalist movement. According to Stam, the Tropicalism of the late 1960s 'fused political nationalism with aesthetic internationalism' (1994: 302) and 'pop-recycled' the aesthetic of 'Anthropophagia'. Xavier argues that '*tropicalismo* introduced the shock constructions and collages inspired by the Anglo-American pop art from the 1950s and 1960s. In the new context, such collages acquired new, different meanings because they melded signs coming from both modern and historic Brazil' (1997: 7). It is clear that standing in the shadow of European and, in particular, Hollywood cinema remains a problem today. Significantly, Argentine filmmakers appear to have the same 'obsession', as Falicov argues:

This notion of recognition or *espejismo*, is an issue that cosmopolitan Argentines have struggled with throughout its [Argentina's] history. It is clear that the 'boom' in Argentine cinema helped to shape and sanitise Argentina's image internationally; more importantly, in films like *La historia oficial* (Luis Puenzo, 1985) it constructed a middle-class image of itself, thereby affirming (and to some extent reifying) its identity within a broader international middle-class aesthetic (2007: 73).

The need for recognition is also related to the fact that in order to develop their own self-image, Argentines and Brazilians depend on the images of their countries that are projected around the world. In fact, demand for images of what is seen as the Third World from European and North American audiences is a recurrent issue in contemporary scholarship. For instance, Bentes argues that Rocha's aesthetics of hunger was against the 'clichéd images of misery that feed the international circuit of information up to today', which according to her reflect 'Europeans' paternalism toward the Third World' (2003: 122), whilst Page asserts that 'much Argentine film has focused on representing the poverty and the suffering associated with Argentina's "Third World" status' (2009: 7). Without naturalising neoliberal discourses or treating globalisation as an 'inevitable' path, my analysis of the films will show that assigning these cinemas a peripheral position, as their historical 'Third World' status does, is problematic, in particular in a context marked by the emergence of new economies and decentring activities. Instead of looking at Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, and, more broadly, cultural products from the so-called 'Third World' as mere copies of a culture which originates in the 'centre' of capitalism, this study is interested in the role these national cinemas play in the development of world culture.

Chapter 3. National spaces and globalisation

In this chapter I explore the images of the nation that have emerged in recent Argentine and Brazilian national cinema, situating them within historical discourses on nationhood as well as the countries' experiences of adaptation to different economic and political models in the 1990s. I have chosen to concentrate primarily upon two films, *Born and Bred* and *Central Station*, not only because of their use of mythical and remote settings in Patagonia and the *sertão* (north-eastern backlands), respectively — but also because the films revisit locations which are important in the Argentine and Brazilian cinema traditions while marking a departure from many of the characteristics of previous approaches to these regions. Although *Central Station* has been exhaustively explored (some of the key publications on the film will be mentioned in this Chapter), I decided to select it as a case study given its similarities with *Born and Bred* in terms of narrative: the tragic death of a family member in a traffic accident leads the protagonist to the so-called 'margins' of the nation. Both films bring representations of the city and country together and explore identity negotiation within the national territory. In the first part of this chapter, readings of contemporary cinematic representations of the *sertão* and Patagonia will be historicised in relation to the revolutionary thrust that informed cinema in the 1960s and 1970s. I will also investigate how these locations are traditionally positioned in the binary of rural and urban, and how the films negotiate this binary. In the second part, I will explore the ways in which the films *Born and Bred* and *Central Station* juxtapose the city to these remote places by articulating and interrogating the process of imagining Argentine and Brazilian cultural identity in a neoliberal context. In order to do so, the chapter will establish a dialogue between the films and more general understandings of postmodern culture, as scholars such as David Harvey have argued that neoliberalism is intrinsically related to postmodernity: '[t]he cultural consequences of the dominance of such a market ethic are legion' (2005: 4).

Sertão and Patagonia: the cornerstones of the modern state

Understanding how Patagonia and *sertão* (Figure 1) have historically been imagined at a national level will provide significant insight into the analysis of the films' re-constructions of these regions. Considering that both regions have been seen as obstacles to the countries' progress and the constitution of the modern state, these places, in their own particular way, have been largely associated with notions of unproductiveness, emptiness and barbarism. In other words, there is a historical association between *sertão* and Patagonia with discourses on modernity which posit their supposed 'backwardness'. The inhabitants are often considered to be products of a harsh environment that demands more physical endurance than the intellectual exercise promoted by modern ideology. Consequently, they are often associated with the 'uncivilised other' of modern discourses, resulting in an identity that is defined by a marginal presence. In fact, a central idea to the development of both the Argentine and Brazilian states was the need to pacify the 'barbaric', a term often used to refer to the inhabitants of barren lands such as Patagonia and *sertão*.

Perhaps it is the very fact that these places and their inhabitants did not fit modern positivist discourses surrounding the emergence of the modern Argentine and Brazilian state that paved the way for the many symbolisms associated with these mythical lands. For instance, the *sertanejo*, the resident of the semi-arid interior of north-eastern Brazil, became considered a threat to national security when in 1897, eight years after the proclamation of the Republic, the War of Canudos broke out in a nearly uninhabited region of the state of Bahia in the north-east of Brazil. The War, a messianic movement against the newly-founded Republic led by Antônio Conselheiro,¹⁷ was first considered a localised religious movement, but soon became a national concern. In this regard, Mark D. Anderson argues that Canudos:

[...] infringed on capital's domination by drawing workers away from local ranches and the sugarcane plantations of the coast, as exploitable labor became scarce and the negation of private property prevailed, Canudos suddenly became visible to the federal government as a threat to national security (2008: 549).

¹⁷ 'Conselheiro' translates as 'Counsellor'.

Indeed, the War mobilised the nation, as soldiers from different Brazilian states were sent to Canudos to fight the rebels, establishing the figure of the *sertanejo* as the Brazilian's barbaric other. In this regard, Anderson states that the war of Canudos 'was also a performative act that unequivocally branded national identity as white and liberal, the negation in every sense of Antonio Conselheiro and his conservative, mixed-race followers' (2008: 549). The *sertanejo*, who was an obscure national figure prior to Canudos, became a protagonist in Brazilian history and culture, in particular after the publication of Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* in 1902, which rendered issues relating to race, drought and the Republic's modernising projects visible to the nation. As a result of this transition from being considered a marginalised land to a threat to the nation, the *sertão* soon became a setting of many Brazilian literary texts and films. In fact, some of the films that mark the Brazilian cinematic tradition centre on the figure of the *sertanejo*, and enter into a dialogue with foundational texts in the country's literary tradition, including for instance, the film *Barren Lives* (*Vidas secas*, Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1963), which was based on Graciliano Ramos' 1939 novel of the same name.



1. The semi-arid interior of north-eastern Brazil and Argentine Patagonia.¹⁸

Like *sertão*,¹⁹ Patagonia evokes the notion of the desert. Patagonia was one of the so-called 'marginal' and 'empty' spaces that the Argentine nation-state

¹⁸ Pictures taken from: <http://nossossemiario.blogspot.com/p/sertao-semi-arido-o-sertao-semi-arido.html> and <http://www.southernexplorations.com/patagonia-travel/LuxuryPatagonia.htm> (accessed 23 September 2011).

appropriated during the campaign to 'Conquer the Desert' in the 1870s. This campaign resulted in the extermination of the indigenous population, considered 'an undesirable obstacle in the path of the development of a property-owning elite and the general economic development of the country which required greater tracts of land to support growing agricultural products' (Dodds 1993: 322). The incorporation of Patagonia into the Argentine Republic was also vital to Argentine territorial disputes with Chile. As Gabriela Nouzeilles puts it:

[...] during the process of nation-building in Argentina and Chile, both countries claimed Patagonia as fundamental: the region's control and occupation were crucial not only for the economic future of each country, but also for defining their political and cultural communities (1999: 37).

Following the success of the 'Conquer the Desert' campaign and the genocide of the native population in Patagonia, the modern Argentine state was founded. In regard to the violence involved in the creation of the modern nation state, Bhabha argues that there exists a 'syntax of forgetting': 'to be obliged to forget – in the construction of the national present – is not a question of historical moment; it is the construction of a discourse on society that *performs* the problem of totalising the people and unifying the national will' (230: 1994). Of course, this is a pertinent notion to the understanding of the stereotypes and preconceptions about national groups, given that both case studies in this chapter portray the interaction between city dwellers and inhabitants of these so-considered 'barren lands'. The inhabitants of these places are neither completely embraced nor totally neglected in notions of national identity. Instead, they are liminal groups who have blurred the boundaries necessary for the creation of the modern nation state. Dodds argues that in post-independence Argentina, the Indian 'served as a starting point in the construction of national community where the boundaries of the self and other were diffused and multiple', and continues by stating that 'the "conquest of the desert" in the 1870s was symptomatic of those attempts to differentiate and secure fragile identities' (1993: 319). Likewise, *sertão* inhabitants also posit a problem to modern notions of Brazilian national identity, as Anderson states in his analysis of Cunha's *Os Sertões*:

¹⁹ Etymologically, *sertão* seems to derive from *desertão*, the Portuguese augmentative form of 'desert'.

[q]uestioning the ethics of the Republic's modernizing project creates tension throughout the work, resulting in contradictory representations of the *sertanejo* simultaneously as the 'cerne', or seed, of Brazilian nationality and a threat to the rational nation (2008: 553).

Violence and the impact of the environment on people's lives have shaped the ways in which these regions and their inhabitants are imagined and thereby represented in national literature and cinema. In line with Bhabha's notion of the syntax of forgetting, these lands of conflict, 'forgotten' by the dominant positivist national narrative, became a symbol of marginalisation and oppression. This idea was taken up by *Cinema Novo* films which signified *sertão* as a locus of socialist resistance in the context of the military regime. As this set of conventions, which has been continually recycled in both Argentine and Brazilian culture, is interrelated with the emergence of the modern state, the point of departure of my analysis of the two films is that the traditional ways in which these regions and their inhabitants are imagined by the nation has been transformed in the context of globalisation and postmodernity.

Cinematic return to the *sertão* and Patagonia

Together with the favelas (shanty towns) in Rio, the *sertão* has been, according to scholars such as Lúcia Nagib (2003), Ivana Bentes (2003), and Luiz Zanin Oricchio (2003), a privileged location in the Brazilian cinema tradition. As argued in the previous chapter, examining recent films against the background of cinematic tradition, in particular that of the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, is an established way of investigating the ways in which they have portrayed the nation. Perhaps one of the best known comparisons in studies of Brazilian cinema is Bentes' critique of contemporary constructions of *sertão*, which, according to her, represent poverty in a paternalist and conformist way. Bentes opposes the construction of the *sertão* in *Cinema Novo* films, which signified the region as locus of radical political change and social revolution, including for instance, *The Guns* (*Os fuzis*, Ruy Guerra 1964) and *Black God, White Devil* (*Deus e o diabo*

na terra do sol, Glauber Rocha 1964) to more recent *sertão* films such as *The Battle of Canudos* (*Guerra de Canudos*, Sérgio Rezendo, 1997), *Landscapes of Memory* (*O sertão das memórias*, José Araujo, 1996) and *Central Station*, in order to argue that the contemporary cinematic *sertão* is a place where 'misery is more and more consumed as an element of "typicality" or "naturalness" in the face of which there is nothing to be done' (2003: 122-3). The author draws on Glauber Rocha's manifesto 'An Aesthetics of Hunger' (1967) to coin the term 'Cosmetics of Hunger' (2003). Although Bentes' argument provides a fresh insight into the aesthetics and ethical questions underlining the increasingly popular films that depict violence and misery, including the internationally acclaimed *City of God*, *Bus 174* (*Ônibus 174*, José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda, 2002) and *Elite Squad* (*Tropa de Elite*, José Padilha, 2007), it does not appear to take into account the ways in which recent films deal with their own socio-political context, which differs greatly from the radical politics against dictatorship that informed *Cinema Novo*.

The same tendency to compare the two historical moments is observed in scholarship on Argentine cinema, as parallels between the contemporary constructions of Patagonia in contemporary cinema and those in 1960s and early 1970s filmmaking are constantly being drawn. Like the *sertão* in recent Brazilian films, Patagonia in contemporary Argentine film is a locus of individual conflicts rather than the political struggles that marked the Argentine cinema tradition, in particular that of the *Grupo Cine Liberación*, which according to Falicov (2007: 36) defined filmmaking as a 'guerilla activity' against a military regime that had outlawed Peronismo. Patagonia, a geography that was locus for social revolution in *Rebellion in Patagonia* (*La Patagonia Rebelde*, Héctor Olivera, 1974), has now become a setting for other critically acclaimed films such as Fernando Solana's *The Journey* (*El viaje*, 1992), made prior to the boom in Argentine filmmaking, and more contemporary films such as Carlos Sorín's *Minimal Stories* (*Historias mínimas*, 2002) and his subsequent film *Bombón, el perro* (2004). While *Rebellion in Patagonia* centres on a labour movement, recent films set in Patagonia, including for example Trapero's *Crane World* (*Mundo grúa*, 1999) and *Born and Bred* still address social issues but through the portrayal of individual struggle.

Although the constant appropriation by contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films of two recurrent locations that marked the avant-gardes in Latin America shows that the New Cinema movements of the 1960s remain key points of reference for contemporary filmmaking, the constant contrast between these two moments has led some critics to label contemporary cinemas as 'depoliticised'. In fact, much of the criticism of the two cinemas that re-emerged in the mid 1990s is engendered by nostalgia for the revolutionary impetus that marked the militant cinema of the 1960s. In this regard, in the opening lines of her book, *El cine argentino de hoy: entre el arte y la política*, Rangil contends that the book starts with the premise that 'it is not possible to talk about political militancy through the camera in the same way in which it had been done in the 60s' (2007: 11).²⁰ According to the author, the book, which is a compilation of essays, assesses whether the ideology that informed the politics and aesthetics of 1960s filmmaking in Latin America remains valid as a framework for the analysis of contemporary films. Rangil then suggests that the notion of political cinema has perhaps changed and that the political content of contemporary films is not as 'obvious' as in films pertaining to the New Latin American cinema movement of the 1960s. Similarly, Page argues that contemporary Argentine films are 'often erroneously labelled apolitical in their eschewal of explicit representation of class conflict or their refusal to organise their narratives around an identifiable program for social or economic change' (2009: 181). Perhaps labelling contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema 'apolitical' echoes a more general criticism of the superficiality of the postmodern condition. Frederic Jameson has famously argued that 'late capitalism' is characterised by the 'nostalgia film' that 'consumes the past in the form of glossy images' (1991: 287). Therefore, Brazilian cinema's recycling of the past through citation of the 'utopic imaginary' (Nagib, 2006) related to the projects of social-revolution in the 1960s, and the use of aestheticised violence (Bentes, 2003), appears to be typical of postmodern culture in a more general way. Moreover, as a result of the fragmentation of grand narratives, a characteristic of the postmodern condition (see Lyotard, 1984), the focus has shifted from anti-colonial and utopic struggles to more individualistic ones, which can, perhaps, explain the increasing number of Brazilian road movies that centre on individual characters rather than

²⁰ 'La presente colección de ensayos sobre cine argentino parte de la premisa de que ya no es posible hablar de militancia política a través de la cámara de la misma maneras en que se había concebido en los años 60' (2007: 11).

social mobilisations. Road movies also enhance the opportunity for 'unexpected encounter' (Xavier, 2003), which, according to Xavier, is a main motif not only in contemporary Brazilian cinema, but in cinema in general. Xavier argues that '[d]ealing with the complexities of current social life, the films emphasise individual encounters, singularities, tending to leave aside narrative forms more directly concerned with the exposure of the social-historical forces that condition human action' (2003: 61).

This shifted focus, which is underscored by the increasing number of Argentine and Brazilian films dealing with journey narratives, appears to reflect the postmodern fragmentation of both the self and national narratives. Argentine and Brazilian films like the ones analysed in this chapter have used geographical displacement to deal with the cultural and social chasm separating the diverse populations within the two countries. While the cliché of country versus city functions as a point from which my analysis begins its critique, the *sertão* and Patagonia cannot be regarded as a simple counterpart to the city. The two films selected for this chapter, in markedly different ways, portray these regions as spiritual retreats for the city dweller. Given that the focus of critical attention on similarities and differences between the two movements overshadows other narrative possibilities of articulation of the country's social changes and its positioning in the global system, my analysis of *Central Station* and *Born and Bred* must take into consideration how the national experience of globalisation and neoliberalism has changed the two countries' historical profiles and the ways in which Argentineans and Brazilians imagine their country today.

Central Station: From the sea to the sertão

The internationally acclaimed Brazilian-French film coproduction, *Central Station*, charts the story of Dora, a retired teacher who works at Rio de Janeiro's central station, writing letters for illiterate people in exchange for money (which she does not always post). She meets Josué, a poor nine year old boy who has never

met his father, but hopes to do so. His mother sends a letter to his father through Dora, saying that she hopes for a family reunion. Not long after, Josué's mother is killed in a bus accident outside the train station and the boy is left homeless. Initially reluctant to be responsible for the boy, Dora sells him to what appears to be a human organ harvesting organisation. After being made to feel guilty by a friend, she gets him back and decides to help him find his father, whose most recent address is in the north-east region. Like Wim Wenders's *Alice in the Cities* (*Alice in den Städten*, 1974), *Central Station* tells the story of an adult who happens to be in charge of a child who is not a relative. What links both child and adult is their experience of being abandoned by their father, which a number of scholars, including for instance Oricchio (2003), have interpreted as a metaphor for the 'lost' nation during the Collor era. In fact, the viewer quickly assumes that there is no such father, symbolically named Jesus, creating an interweaving between religious and filmic narrative, as the search for the father becomes the boy's salvation and Dora's redemption. Such an interweaving contributes to the mythical and spiritual dimension of the *sertão*, as it is where the father is expected to be. In regard to the relationship between return, nature and national unity in films, Naficy argues:

What is substituted for the impossibility of return and reunion is the staging of a metaphoric reunion with nature and a return to imaginatively constructed categories that represent prelapsarian wholeness, such as imagined communities (Anderson 1983), invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), or foundational myths of a pure, original people, or folk (Hall 1996) (2001: 156).

In line with Naficy's argument above, *Central Station* signifies the region as locus of both individual and national reconciliation using in the words of Xavier, 'the worn-out cliché created by the opposition between the "demonic" city and the sacred countryside' (2003: 59). Nonetheless, the film subverts narratives and techniques that marked the filmmaking of the 1960s while establishing a dialogue with other national cinemas, as aforementioned some of the critique of the films made in the past two decades echoes a more general understanding of postmodern culture. As previously stated in this chapter, Bentes draws a contrast between the two historical moments and argues that contemporary films have adopted a 'cosmetics of hunger',

in Bentes' terms, instead of the 'aesthetics of hunger' established by Glauber, who raised important aesthetic and ethical questions concerning the representation of poverty. According to Bentes, the classic films of *Cinema Novo* 'created an aesthetics based on the dry cut, the nervous framing, the overexposure, the hand-held camera, the fragmented narrative with mirrored the cruelty of the *sertão*' (2003: 124). *Central Station* became one of the main targets of Bentes' critique for its conventional narrative and techniques. With regard to the comparison between *Cinema Novo*'s representation of the *sertão* and the contemporary ones (Figure 2), Walter Salles has reportedly defended fellow filmmaker Andrucha Waddington against some of the accusations of 'glamourising' poverty in the film *Me, You, Them* (*Eu, tu, eles*, 2000) by asking why 'poor people and poverty should always should always be shot in grainy black and white' (cited in Dennison and Shaw, 2004: 216).²¹ Significantly, another film directed by Salles that brings a rather romanticised and poetic representation of the *sertão* is *Behind the Sun* (*Abril despedaçado*, 2001), which centres on the story of a young man who questions the rivalry between his family and the neighbouring one. It is worth mentioning that other contemporary representations of the *sertão* place it in a transnational cultural context. In *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, analysed in Chapter 4, the film uses a road movie format and situates the *sertão* in the context of the Second World War. Such a romantic view of a land that was previously thought of as the locus of social revolution led critics to point out that there has been a glamourisation of the *sertão*.



²¹ Walter Salles' interview for the website www.criticos.com.br. 'Walter Salles sem cortes' (2002). Available at: http://www.criticos.com.br/new/artigos/critica_interna.asp?secoes=&artigo=88 (accessed 10 August 2011).

2. *Central Station*'s construction of *sertão*: bright colours and serene landscape (left) as opposed to Rocha's bleak construction of the *sertão* in *Black God White Devil* (right).

Although the film engages with social problems in Brazil such as police corruption, child exploitation, and illiteracy, I have chosen for the purpose of this chapter to concentrate on how the filmic representation of Rio de Janeiro and the northeastern *sertão* depart from well known representations in the Brazilian cinema tradition in order to explore the extent to which these space practices dialogue with more global understandings of the city and culture. In fact, what makes *Central Station* original is precisely the fact that its representation of the *sertão* is informed by postmodern issues and aesthetics. Through the appropriations of recurrent locations and motifs of other key films in the Brazilian cinematic tradition, *Central Station* evokes the end of revolutionary projects of the *Cinema Novo*, creating a nostalgic tone (Nagib, 2006). Another important rupture is that traditional notions of underdevelopment, 'third world' and marginalisation are now problematised as a result of the uneven processes that mark globalisation. While Cinema Novo provides 'allegories of underdevelopment' (Xavier, 1997) as a part of a national project to use the nation as a point of anti-colonial resistance, in recent representations of the *sertão* (often, as the films analysed in this thesis show, international coproductions) the aesthetics go beyond national boundaries, and therefore no longer belong to this same national project. Linking back to zero as a metaphor for the start of a cinematic journey in the re-emergent Brazilian Cinema, *Central Station* has played an important role in reasserting national cinema. Therefore, in challenging traditional notions of rural and urban that informed some of the most significant Brazilian films both in terms of narrative and aesthetics, the film inserted Brazilian cinema into a different, and far more commercially successful, context than that of Third Cinema.

The notion of a 'renaissance' of cinematic production called for a starting point, a centre, which is implied in the title of Salle's films including for instance *Midnight* (*O primeiro dia*, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, 1998) and *Central Station*. It is worth mentioning that the title in Portuguese, *Central do Brasil* (translates as 'Central of Brazil'), refers to Rio de Janeiro's famous train station, as well as alluding to its location in the heart of Brazil. Perhaps the fact that the journey starts from a station

that literarily means the economic centre of the nation and ends in the margins also relates to the need to negotiate both Brazilian national identity and the national cinema that was re-emerging when *Central Station* was made. Nagib (2006: 61) points out that the need to 're-discover' the country has shaped the work of filmmakers who spent a long time abroad and began to return to Brazil in the beginning of the 1990s, most notable of whom was Salles. The fact that the film is a coproduction made by an upper class filmmaker who had recently returned to Brazil explains how this representation of the *sertão* is often understood within a postmodern cinematic context, including for instance Jameson's aforementioned notion of 'nostalgia film'. The option to adopt a road movie format also relates both to the film's dialogue with other cinemas - in particular American - and to the film's need to deal with a domestic cinema now inserted within a globalised transnational context. Nagib observes that these motifs of 'zero' and 'centre', which relate to the 'search for the nation' (2007: xx), are also present in films such as Jean-Luc Godard's *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (*Allemagne 90 neuf zero*, 1991) and Roberto Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (*Germania anno zero*, 1948). Therefore choosing the 'Central do Brasil' railway station as the starting point of the characters' journey evokes a new start of the cinematic journey after years of stagnation of the film industry. The manifestation of this cinematic journey of 're-discovering the country' appears to be accompanied by an increase in the number of contemporary films that adopt the road movie genre, which is also explored in my analysis of border crossing within the Southern Cone in Chapter 7. Nagib's argument that Brazilian filmmakers have turned Brazil into a 'subject of research' (2006: 61) perhaps explains the increasing number of contemporary films that adopt the format of road movies. The road movie and journey narrative allows the filmmaker and the characters to map the national territory and explore its peculiarities while drawing on or rejecting former representations of the nation, as is the case with *Central Station*.

Another rupture with Cinema Novo is that the film focuses on private matters, in particular paternal abandonment. Nonetheless, the film can be interpreted as allegorical, because, as many critics point out, the search for the father can be seen as a national quest for a 'lost' nation. The film situates its preoccupation with themes of national identity, cinema and social issues within a frame of reference based in Catholicism and focusing on the private sphere, leaving little space for

traditional political readings. The blurred boundaries between private and public sphere can be understood as a consequence of the very fact that the film was situated in a neoliberal context which is characterised by an increase in the privatisation of public spaces. The representation of Rio de Janeiro, particularly the station, links to notions that relate individual spaces and times with the city. Michel de Certeau argues that the city is created by 'footsteps': 'Their swarming mass is an innumerable collections of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together' (de Certeau in Harvey 1990: 157). This idea of a collection of singularities is conveyed by the medium shot of Dora on the crowded train. Another sequence that highlights this singularity within the city is one of the first sequences that takes place in *Central do Brasil* railway station. The sequences consist of a series of shots of characters saying the destination of their letters. The addresses given by the characters and their accents indicate that most of Dora's customers are from the north-eastern region. This sequence subtly addresses the high illiteracy rate of the north-eastern migrant and exposes the fragmentation of their stories in the city, as their communication with families and lovers are both disrupted by geographical distance. The singularisation of people in the city is highlighted by the approach used by Salles to frame Dora's customers. The montage creates a mosaic of faces that highlights individual stories and characters in the city. A similar approach is taken at the end of *The Motorcycle Diaries* to comment on the multiplicity of Latin American identity. In both sequences, Salles focuses on the images of marginalised identities within the nation and region, underscoring a singularisation of the individuals that form Latin America.

The singularisation of characters at the Central Station assigns a social meaning to the place, as it appears to be frequented mostly by one segment of society, the working class, which perhaps contributes to the dystopian representation of the city that moves away from the national and transnational imaginary that refers to Rio de Janeiro as 'the wonderful city'. The sequences in the city are shot with low-key artificial lighting and Rio is characterised by its industrial landscape, including the buildings scattered around the railway station and the seedy apartments where Dora lives. Moreover, one of the most pertinent aspects of the film is that none of the famous landmarks of Rio de Janeiro are shown and the city is representative of the decay of ethical values, as teenagers are shot dead by police for petty theft, and

children like Josué are left abandoned and vulnerable to exploitation. The difference between two places is also underscored by the film's depiction of public transportation in Rio and the north-east (Figure 3). It is in the *sertão* where people are engaged in collective activities, in particular religious ones: singing religious songs and the pilgrimage in which Dora is swept up. As Deborah Shaw succinctly puts it, '*Central Station* clearly fictionalises rural and urban spaces, demonising and romanticising them, and creates characters that come to represent these spaces' (2003: 169).



3. Means of transportation: individuality in the train in Rio de Janeiro in contrast to the truck in the north-east, where people engage in the collective act of singing religious songs.

The child, a factor of reconciliation within the narrative, is at the same time *carioca* (from Rio de Janeiro) and north-eastern. I suggest that readings that relate Dora to the city and the boy to the north-east reinforce the historical binary of rural and urban, thereby missing the fact that the boy is a hybrid of both. While the boy is able to engage with religious activities in the north-east and, indeed, represent the 'moral reservoir' (Xavier, 2003: 62) that can be found in the north-east, he also talks about sex, shocking the evangelic truck driver. His sexualisation, which comes into play in another conversation with Dora, also reveals that he had lived in the 'religionless' city. Therefore, the figure of the child is central to arguments that the film engages with the old binaries in order to chart the reconfiguring of national identity.

The film explores the interconnectedness between urban areas and the *sertão*, as suggested by the presence of north-eastern characters in the economic centre. This approach foregrounds north-eastern identity as intrinsic to urban identities in Brazil and is also a rupture from *Cinema Novo*'s representation of the *sertanejo*. By

signifying the *sertanejo* as a rebel and a revolutionary, *Cinema Novo* situated these characters as the nation's 'other', that is the marginalised, the forgotten. In *Central Station*, although the north-eastern migrants remain marginalised in the economic centre, the film complicates the traditional association of the city with civilisation and *sertão* with barbarism, thereby engaging with anti-capitalist discourses where the city is the stage of moral decay and the place where identity fragments. The film also comments on the high rate of illiteracy in the north-eastern area: literacy is what sets Dora apart from the north-easterners throughout the film and even gives her the opportunity to exploit them, as she does at the beginning of the film. Dora makes money writing letters to north-eastern people both in the Central Station and the *sertão* and she is asked by Josué's brother to read the letter from their father. Although the dependency of north-easterners on Dora is visible from the start, the characters provide mutual help as the narrative develops, underlining the interdependency between country and city and challenging the positioning of the country as dependent on the city. Significantly, when *Central Station* was made, the President of Brazil was Fernando Henrique Cardoso, one of the key theorists of 'dependency theory'. A part of *The Princeton Encyclopedia of the World Economy: A-H* is dedicated to explaining this theory:

[...] the core of the dependency relationship between center and periphery is the inability of the periphery to develop an autonomous and dynamic process of technological innovation. The lack of technological dynamism and the difficulties associated with the transfer of technological knowledge lead to the underdevelopment of the periphery with respect to the center (Reinert *et al.*, 2009: 270).

While at the beginning of the film the dependence of Josué and his mother on Dora conveys the notion of countryside as dependent and city as autonomous, the journey shows how the country actually serves Dora to recover the moral and ethical values that she has lost in the city. This dependency must be understood within a broader socio-cultural context, as it evokes both the region's historical problems with drought and the classic representations of Southward migration. The modern *favelas* in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, another distinctive location in the

Brazilian cinematic tradition, were partly engendered by mass migration from rural areas, in particular from the north-eastern region, to the cities. The sea evokes the idea both of civilisation, as the first European colonisers settled by the shore, and progress, as the most industrialised States like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are on the Brazilian coast. Nagib argues that 'the everyday sea of the Brazilian wealthy classes, there for their sole entertainment, remains out of reach of the poor north-eastern' (2007: 51). Given the north-eastern migrants' experience of successive droughts, the sea also became symbolic of freedom in Brazilian culture. For instance, a famous north-eastern prophecy that says that 'the *sertão* will turn into the sea, and the sea will turn into *sertão*' ('O sertão vai virar mar e o mar vai virar sertão') became a leitmotif in Glauber Rocha's *Black God, White Devil*, as Sebastião, the preacher of revolution, promises his followers the fulfilment of this prophecy, establishing a relationship between the sea and political revolution. In fact, Dora rejects the city and even considers living in the *sertão*, an option that subverts national narratives of drought and poverty that impart the notion of *sertão* as a barren land. By renouncing the seaside for the north-east, it also subverts the national narrative where people go towards the sea because it evokes the notion of freedom, what Nagib refers to as the 'utopian sea' (2006). Therefore, not only has *Central Station* subverted previous well-established aesthetic approaches to the *sertão*, but it inverts the direction of important narratives of Brazilian literary and cinema tradition that speak of the *sertanejo's* longing for the sea.

Central Station depicts the migratory journey of *Barren Lives* in reverse, from the city to the countryside, and replaces the bleak mood of that *Cinema Novo* classic, which became synonymous with the 'aesthetics of hunger', by a sense of optimism and possibility for the inhabitants of the long-neglected north-East. Drought and poverty are presented in the film as aspects of local colour rather than serious impediments to a better life (Shaw and Dennison 2007: 110-11).

The return to neorealist techniques in a kind of citation system that has avant-garde cinema of the 1960 as a point of reference testifies to the different understandings of nation as well as national cinema in a globalised context. If nation was the focal point for revolutionary political cinema, now after its fragmentation it was necessary to rebuild it in order to engage with its public role. In *Central Station*,

the re-emergence of Brazilian cinema was perhaps too recent to be certain about its future or to make further announcements about the sociological role of national cinema. Davi Arrigucci Jr argues that 'Cinema has almost always, even when it has got it wrong, acted as a kind of moral opinion poll, sounding out the collective soul of the Brazilian people, as well as playing a significant role in documenting the nation's historical process' (Arrigucci Jr in Nagib, 2007: xi). In a similar way, much literature on contemporary Brazilian cinema focuses on how contemporary Brazilian films rebuild the nation's self-image as well as re-establishing its cinema. In *Central Station*, it appears that Walter Salles was conscious of this dual effort, as he brings *sertão* and city together in the national imaginary while reconciling issues relating to national cinema now inserted in a transnational context, the hiatus in film production, and the role of Brazilian cinema in the global market.

Patagonia as a refuge in *Born and Bred*

As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, Pablo Trapero is a key figure of contemporary Argentine cinema. Born in the province of Buenos Aires in 1971, Trapero had to deal with the impact of the economic crisis in Argentina. In regard to his choice to become a filmmaker, Trapero has argued that given Argentina's dramatic economic situation, many lawyers, doctors and architects have ended up as taxi drivers. He has asserted that this fact influenced his generation to think 'well, if I will be a lawyer and end up as a taxi driver, it is better to be a musician and a taxi driver, for example, as I might be lucky enough to dedicate myself to music and be able to work as a musician'.²² Therefore, he argues, the decline of traditional professions in the context of the crisis has led many young people like him to opt for an artistic career. Significantly, his experience of the economic crisis has exercised considerable influence over his own filmmaking, particularly the way in which he addresses the relationship between the private sphere, more precisely the disintegration of the family unit, and the dysfunctional state.

²² 'Bueno, si voy a ser abogado y acabar de taxista, mejor me dedico a ser músico, por ejemplo, y ser taxista; o, con suerte, me dedico a ser músico y acabo viviendo de la música'. Pablo Trapero interview by Pablo de Cima. Available at <http://www.jgcinema.com/single.php?sl=213> (accessed 12 March 2011).

In his fundamental concern with social issues, Trapero's narratives repeatedly explore the centrality of Buenos Aires in Argentina's national imagery, by deconstructing the popular image of the city or moving away from it. For example, in the films *Crane World* and *Born and Bred*, the protagonist moves from Buenos Aires to Patagonia, in *The Rolling Family* the family travels from a suburb in Buenos Aires to the Province of Misiones and in *Lion's Den* the protagonist leaves a prison in Buenos Aires and escapes to Paraguay. Although much of the narratives of both *Lion's Den* and *El Bonaerense*²³ take place in the province of Buenos Aires, one of the settings is the prison, another recurring location in contemporary Argentine cinema which will be dealt with in more detail in my conclusion. His sixth feature and latest film to date is *Carancho* (2010). While set in San Justo, a suburb of Buenos Aires, it paints a dark picture of the city and its dwellers, as the narrative focuses on the corrupting insurance companies that benefit from road accidents.

Born and Bred provides yet another example of Buenos Aires as a setting for tragic events and which is consequently left. The narrative centres on Santiago, who is abruptly transported from a wealthy life in Buenos Aires to the vast white landscape of Patagonia as a direct result of a car accident that kills his daughter. In fact, the national sense of insecurity and the destabilisation of the middle classes in the heart of Buenos Aires are two ideas that drive the narrative of the film. The film starts with a sequence of photos of a family made up of a daughter, mother and father, smiling and enjoying themselves. The sequence in question, however, conveys two conflicting messages through the use of images and music. While the sequence of pictures shows a family enjoying themselves, Palo Pandolfo's song 'Sangre' ('Blood') introduces dark element to the images, thereby indicating what the narrative has in store for the family. Before the film title appears, the narrative has already introduced two distinctive tones. Firstly, like a cliché from an advert, the family unit is constituted of beautiful people who live in a big stylish house and smile at each other while having breakfast together. Secondly, footage of vast and white spaces filmed with a handheld camera from a bird's eye view gives the impression that the person filming was in a plane. The spectator then discovers that the footage was part of the protagonist's nightmare, as he wakes up in his house and goes to the

kitchen. We then learn that Santiago is an interior designer and the rigid spatial divisions of his house, the stylish objects, and the coordinated way in which the family members dress mirror the character's subjective identity. After the car accident, there is a fade out and then the entire screen is filled with white followed by the footage previously shown during the character's nightmare. We then encounter Santiago living a completely different existence in Patagonia, indicating that the vastness and whiteness of the place had removed all the contours of Santiago's former existence in Buenos Aires. Together with the setting, another element that confirms Santiago's sudden personality change is that he is constantly framed smoking, a habit which he had criticised his wife for at the beginning of the film.

In some scenes from *Born and Bred*, the action is replaced by the act of observation. For instance, the scenes that show the characters resting do not have a clear thematic agenda. The protagonist's silence and the absence of action at a formal level put him in the position of an observer, suggesting that to overcome that trauma, there is not much he could do but to wait around and let time heal it. The film is also an instance both of naturalism and of minimalism that are, according to Page, 'dominant trends in recent Argentine cinema' (2009: 49). The protagonist's subjectivity is constructed through practices which hark back to neorealism. As Angelo Restivo states, 'neorealist aesthetics entail a kind of muteness, where character is not given through dialogue and self-examination but rather through gesture, positioning in space, and architecture' (2002: 35). The relationship between personal geography and identity is also expressed stylistically by the use of colour and camera work. In one of the first sequences, Santiago comments on one of his employees' work, and says 'I would try more saturated colours'. This line underscores the film's self-consciousness about stylisation as the image of his houses both in Buenos Aires and in Patagonia are oversaturated and there is a predominance of the colour white. Through the use of tone, the characters and the objects are perceived in contrast to the bright white background of both the interior and exterior of Santiago's house in Buenos Aires and the natural background of Patagonia.

Addressing the representation of Patagonia in the work of another key filmmaker of Argentine contemporary cinema, Carlos Sorín, Page argues that his

films 'maintain an oblique relationship with traditional constructions of Patagonia in visual and literary texts. They retain some notion of the wilderness as a spiritual retreat for Argentina's city dwellers' (2009: 120). Arguably, the same can be said about *Born and Bred's* construction of Patagonia, as the film signifies the region as a locus of grief. Situating a character who needs to come to terms with the death of his daughter and a guilty conscience in a sparsely populated place where everything happens at a slow pace is a strategy employed by Trapero to build character through the construction of space. The quietness and stillness of the place and the lack of communication between characters gradually become overwhelming as the spectator is aware of Santiago's struggle. In this regard, Trapero asserts that 'despite the landscapes, it is a film about the inside of the character and not about the outside. The images of the landscapes, the settings, the camera movements and what it shows are a materialisation of Santiago's mood and what he does not say'.²⁴

The use of stable camera movements to frame the compartmented interiors of the protagonist's house in Buenos Aires is in stark contrast to the shaky images of the vast white space of his nightmare (Figure 4). The juxtaposition between steady shots of his life in Buenos Aires and open wide shaky shots of Patagonia also emphasises the destabilisation of Santiago's place-based identity. By undermining the stability which had previously defined the protagonist's wealthy lifestyle in Buenos Aires the film illustrates the vulnerability of Argentina's privileged classes. The protagonist and his family live in a gated suburb and given their success in the interior design business they remain apart from the social implications of the economic crisis. Drawing on Argentine sociologist Beatriz Sarlo's argument that growing social segregation in Buenos Aires has hindered the mobility of the middle class who now feel they have to defend their private property, Page asserts that 'the spaces of many contemporary films bear witness to this segregation' (2009: 180). This point becomes clear when, on his way back to Buenos Aires, the representation of the city changes in respect to that of his previous life in the suburbs. Instead, Buenos Aires is now portrayed as a seedy place, which, perhaps, suggests that the

²⁴ 'Y, a pesar de los paisajes, es una película sobre el interior de un personaje y no sobre el personaje con su entorno. Las imágenes del paisaje, los decorados y la forma en que la cámara se mueve y lo que muestra es cómo se materializa el ánimo de Santiago, donde uno puede ver todo lo que él no dice'. Available at <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-3343-2006-10-23.html> (accessed 02 February 2011).

even the wealthy classes are eventually confronted with the social problems facing post-Menemist Argentine society. Such concerns are also central to the work of Trapero, whose films usually either centre on the working class as in *Crane World*, *Lion's Den* and *El Bonaerense* or portray the displacement of the middle class as in *Rolling Family* and *Born and Bred*. Furthermore, in Patagonia, the protagonist experiences a form of temporary work that appears to be typical of the neoliberal economic system, which differs greatly from the more creative job he had in Buenos Aires.



4. The contrast between Santiago's compartmentalised apartment and the vastness of Patagonia shows clearly that the contours of the protagonist's previous secure life are removed. The recurrence of the colour white can be observed both in Buenos Aires and Patagonia.

In situating his preoccupation with the intersection of individual and national problems in the vast white of Patagonia, which is usually considered a marginal space, Trapero subverts the rhetoric of civilisation versus barbarism that cemented the construction of the Argentine modern state. Since its foundation, Buenos Aires became politically and culturally preponderant over the other provinces in Argentina. Therefore, *Born and Bred* establishes a visual dialectic of economic centre and periphery, familiar and unfamiliar, within a literary and cinematic tradition that situates Patagonia in opposition to the urban centre. For the socially isolated protagonist,

Patagonia acquires the meaning of safety, while its harsh environment reflects his anguished subjectivity. Drawing on Charles Darwin and Jean Baudrillard's perceptions of Patagonia as a place that lacks limits, Nouzeilles points out that:

[...] the images of Patagonia are always connected both to the idea of 'world' (hence the 'end of the world') and to the idea of a chronotopical infinity stretching between modernity and barbarism. Seen from this perspective, Patagonia is a paradoxical zone whose very lack of limits confounds a Reason dependent upon limits and scale (1999: 35).

This understanding of Patagonia as a 'boundless' place is a stereotypical cultural perception that also evokes the colonial and often masculine dimensions of travel writing. However, Santiago is not the conventional male character of travelogues who is obsessed with adventure, a figure who functions as a traditional motor of the American Road Movie. Instead, his safety is taken away from him in the heart of Argentina's civilisation, as the concretisation of the deep and widespread fear of losing one's family had already taken place in Buenos Aires. The narrative subverts the sense of 'conquest' and 'adventure' associated with white Argentine masculinity and puts Santiago in the same position as the locals: he has to face the same harsh reality as native people such as the cacique. An aspect of the film that underlines this argument is the friendship between the *porteño* (from Buenos Aires) protagonist and the character Cacique, whose indigenous identity is implied in his very name. By portraying the indigenous character as the one who helps the protagonist in Patagonia, the narrative addresses a sensitive issue of Argentina's history, since the creation of the modern Argentine State followed the massacre of natives in Patagonia. At the time of the creation of a nation-state called 'Argentina', indigenous identity blurred the boundaries between 'inside' and 'outside' of this 'imagined political community'. In this regard, Klaus-John Dodds in 'Geography, Identity and the Creation of the Argentine State' argues that:

In spite of a totalising logic with identified 'them' as 'barbaric' or 'savage', the mutual implication of the white Argentine and the Indian was substantial. For instance, outside of the immediate vicinity of the River Plate, Creoles depended on Indians for guidance, advice on crops and trade exchanges. In

the post-independence context, the blurring remained as the Indian was always present in subsequent attempts to colonise the 'marginal spaces' to the south of Buenos Aires (Patagonia) and to the north-west (Chaco). (1993: 319)

The film portrays negotiations with unfamiliar places and identities within the national territory as an important consequence of the fragmentation of the self in the urban centre. Through displacement, the protagonist is forced out of his familiar, closed middle-class circles, and led to embrace other identities that are marginalised in Argentine society. The title of the film alludes to a sense of belonging other than national as 'nacido y criado' ('born and bred') is an expression used by Patagonian natives to introduce themselves to those whom they consider 'outsiders'. Trapero says he likes the way in which natives present themselves because, according to him, 'almost nobody was born and grew up there' (2006).²⁵ Moreover, the choice of the title 'born and bred' for a film that portrays displacement reveals Trapero's awareness of the sense of 'homelessness'²⁶ which has marked the Argentine experience of globalisation and which will be explored in the next few chapters.

Conclusion

Like most films that bring together city and country, the narratives of both *Central Station* and *Born and Bred* are more interested in portraying the country than the city. In fact, only the beginnings of the narratives are set in urban spaces, namely Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. Setting the narrative in an urban area and then moving away from it is, perhaps, a strategy to create a contrast, as the city, considered the 'heart' of the nation, delimits notions such as the urban and rural spaces, centre and periphery, public and private. This is a result of the destabilisation of the notion that relates modernisation with positivist discourses on progress. Naficy argues that 'people have considered nature and wilderness to be a sacred space-

²⁵ 'Se autodenominan así, pero lo curioso es que casi nadie es realmente nacido y criado allá', explica Trapero'. Available at <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-3343-2006-10-23.html> (accessed 02 February 2011).

²⁶ Term taken from Jesinghausen's notion of 'the transcendental homelessness of modern life'. (Jesinghausen in Everett 2004: 17)

time of uncontaminated spirituality, contrasting it with the profane space-time of culture and civilisation' (156). This relationship between rural area and spirituality is also relevant to the analysis of *Born and Bred*, as traditional constructions of Patagonia in visual and literary texts, according to Page, 'retain some notion of the wilderness as a spiritual retreat for Argentina's city dwellers' (2009: 120). The construction of the *sertão* as a place of spiritual rebirth is also present in *Central Station*, as it is in the *sertão* that Dora interacts with popular religion and lives a sort of rite as she undergoes a spiritual experience during pilgrimage. Like Salles, who preferred to leave aside postcard images of Rio de Janeiro in *Central Station*, Trapero is one of the significant number of Argentine filmmakers that decided to exchange famous images of Buenos Aires, including, for instance, 9th July Avenue, for a relatively unfamiliar setting such as Patagonia. The option to move away from Buenos Aires to the margins reaffirms the existence of this binary while complicating the historical bipolar structure which separates the province of Buenos Aires from the rest of the country. In placing such a structure in a historical context, sociologists Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler argue that:

[t]he opposition between *unitarios* and *federales* and between anti-Peronists and Peronists embody the conflict between the port city of Buenos Aires and the rest of the country, a dichotomy that in Latin America and as a whole is summed up by the formula 'civilisation and barbarousness'. Thus, nationalising in Argentina has historically meant Buenos Aires gaining hegemony over an area of the country or a sector of the population, or its converting a culturally diverse population generally considered inferior to the dominant culture' (2005: 24-25).

In a similar way, the characters in *Central Station* move away from the coast, which was the first to be colonised, and the region associated with progress. Nonetheless, by focusing on two films that centre on individual journeys that subvert traditional migration patterns, I do not intend in my analysis to downplay the continued socio-cultural importance of the journey from periphery to centre. In fact, films like the aforementioned Argentine film *Bad Times (Mala época)*, Nicolás Saad, Mariano de Rosa, Salvador Roselli, and Rodrigo Moreno, 1998) and *Little Sky (El cielito)*, María Victoria Menis, 2004), the Brazilian *The Middle of the World (O*

caminho das nuvens, Vicente Amorin, 2003), and *Love for Sale* (*O céu de Suely*, Karim Ainouz, 2006) narrate stories of migrant characters who hope to succeed in urban centres. Moreover, the film analysed in the next chapter, *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, is yet another film that charts the *sertanejo*'s aspiration of southward migration. I selected *Central Station* and *Born and Bred* because they engage with marginal spaces and their inhabitants, addressing the fragmentation of the family and the nation and exposing some of the problems in their sense of unity. While *Central Station* presents a rose-tinted version of the *sertão*, Patagonia in *Born and Bred* remains harsh, as it mirrors the protagonist's internal feelings. Another crucial difference between the films is that the father in *Central Station* functions as a narrative force that never appears in the diegesis, while *Born and Bred* is centred on a father who goes to Patagonia to come to terms with the death of his daughter. These aesthetic and narrative divergences between the two films are arguably related to the different cinematic contexts they were inserted. It has been said that *Central Station* was the second film made by Walter Salles upon his return to Brazil and allegorical meanings were attributed to the search for a father in this filmic return to a recurring location of Cinema Novo. Such allegorical interpretations are underscored by Salles' previous film *Foreign Land* in which the nation is in decline and the father is absent; these differences will be discussed in more details Chapter 7. *Born and Bred*, however, was made ten years later than *Central Station*, in a period where cinema was already consolidated in Argentina. Therefore, the spatial practice of Patagonia is not directly associated with the need for reconciliation within a national cinema context.

From the postcolonial perspective adopted by Third Cinema, these lands of conflict prompt the articulation of marginalised narratives for political purposes. However, in signifying the *sertão* as the locus of national and personal conciliation and using Patagonia as a place of social alienation and emptiness, *Central Station* and *Born and Bred*, respectively, treat these lands of social mobilisation as lands of individual stories of characters who have lost family members. In fact, the themes of family, identity and journey are inextricably interwoven yet represented as fragmented in the films. Whilst in the cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, social unrest takes place in Patagonia and the *sertão*, these areas are settings of self-discovery, spiritual rebirth, reconciliation in *Central Station* and isolation and grief in *Born and*

Bred. Therefore, these films move away from a Third Cinema project by breaking away from previous representations that marked the avant-garde filmmaking of the 1960s and 1970s while incorporating and contributing to transnational cinematic aesthetics. For instance, in *Born and Bred*, the weather and climate of Patagonia are used to display characters' feelings within a filmic strategy that rejects the use of shot/reverse-shot editing characteristic of classical cinema. Such detraction from the action-reaction schemata of classical cinematic narrative provides a link with the New Argentine Cinema's appropriation of Italian neorealism. As Page puts it:

Although New Argentine Cinema, like Italian neorealism, appears to have fashioned itself for an epistemological task, that of documenting new forms of society, its dissociative form and its refusal to indulge our desire for a clear social and political meaning to be imposed on its fragmentary narratives represents a deliberate attempt to stop short of simplistic political manifestos (2009: 42).

Although *Central Station* uses neorealist approaches – non-professional actors, non-studio locations – it adopts a melodramatic approach to elicit emotional reactions. In both *Central Station* and *Born and Bred*, the film style is not homogeneous throughout. For instance, the handheld camera, a typical element of documentary style, is used to show the footage of Patagonia at the beginning of *Born and Bred*. As mentioned earlier, *Central Station* also employs a documentary style in the sequence of shots of characters telling Dora what to write. Through the use of allegories and religious grand-narratives, *Central Station* seems more preoccupied with national identity and culture than *Born and Bred*, a film that does not offer as much symbolism, as it attempts to offer instead a more detached and observational gaze.

The nation is no longer articulated as means of resistance, unlike the utopic revolutionary projects that had the *sertão* as one of the main setting in the 1960s. In this context, the use of the *sertão* as a reference to *Cinema Novo* in more recent Brazilian films has a nostalgic tone. Page also draws attention to the ways in which citations to the political and aesthetic avant-gardes in Latin America are used by contemporary Argentine films to remit to a period in which art and social change

were interconnected. According to Page 'this nostalgia is accompanied, paradoxically, by an equally postmodern scepticism concerning the social role in articulating social change' (2009: 35). It is in the pre-capitalist *sertão* and Patagonia where characters deal with their feelings of loss of belonging and security, feelings which are related to the breakdown of both the family and the nation. The films do not convey revolutionary ideas articulated at the margins nor portray individuals in search of adventure in these barren lands. Instead, the films explore new forms of the representation of the nation that go beyond a national project, and are inserted in a more global culture and aesthetics.

Chapter 4. European immigration in Argentine and Brazilian narratives of nationhood

The figure of the immigrant has become prominent in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema, in part as a result of the increase in debates regarding the incorporation of multiculturalism in the countries' constitutions and politics in the 1980s and 1990s, in part too because of their vivid presence in foundational narratives of Argentine and Brazilian nationhood. The present chapter will investigate how three films made in the past decade deal with Argentina's and Brazil's historical statuses as countries founded by immigrants, and their European heritages, by focusing on the representation of the European immigrant. I will assess how the representation of the European immigrant in these three films affirms or refutes traditional ways in which European immigration is embedded in the Argentine and Brazilian narratives of nationhood. The films selected for this study, *Bar El Chino*, *Inheritance* and *Cinema, Aspirins, and Vultures*, are deeply inflected by the countries' experiences of globalisation, as the experience of displacement in these films appears not only to be symptomatic of the intensification of global migration, but also intrinsic to Argentine and Brazilian national identity. In exploring how European identity is embedded in Argentine and Brazilian narratives of nationhood, this chapter will provide a background for my argument in the next two chapters in which I deal with emigration to Europe. I argue that understanding the role that European immigration has played in national discourses is vital to investigate how emigration to the European Union (a recurrent theme in other national cinemas), has received a complex treatment by contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema. Exploring the importance of such narratives to Argentine and Brazilian identity and culture will allow a better understanding of the debates developed in the next chapter, *The Europeanness of Argentine and Brazilian Cinema*, which focuses on how contemporary films have portrayed Argentine and Brazilian characters who claim their 'Europeanness' in order to acquire European citizenship and emigrate.

European Heritage and the construction of Argentine identity: *Bar El Chino* and *Inheritance*

Because of its pertinence to the understanding of how Argentine cinema has negotiated national identity and the experience of displacement in a globalised context, *Bar El Chino* (Daniel Burak, 2003) can be put into dialogue with other films analysed in this thesis. In fact, it brings together some of the key issues raised in this thesis: emigration to Europe in the context of crisis, the adoption of a self-reflexive approach in films made in a transnational context, and, most relevant to the present chapter, European identity as integral to narratives of nationhood in South American countries. The film, made in the wake of the 2001 economic crisis, comments on the need to re-construct national narratives by portraying two filmmakers' struggle to make a documentary during *El Corralito*, an economic measure that froze bank accounts in 2001. The story-line interweaves real footage of television news programmes from 2001, testimonials and fictional narrative, giving an impression of greater immediacy. A strategy that emphasises such interweaving is the direct cut between a shot of someone holding a camera and archive footage, suggesting that the footage shown is what the person who had just been framed was filming. The blurred lines between fiction and documentary combined with the film's self-reflexivity (it is a film about making a documentary) gives a more authentic tone to the film and enhances the possibility of Argentine spectators identifying with the characters, as it depicts a real and recent national trauma. Significantly, Salles' *Foreign Land*, a film analysed in Chapter 6, is set when bank deposits were frozen in Brazil, ten years earlier than Argentina, and uses real footage of the announcement made by Collor's government. As I argue in Chapter 6, the use of genuine footage enhances recognition, as the national audience can be interpellated to the shared sense of chaos, or in the words of Fernão Pessoa Ramos, the national 'statute of incompetence' (2003).

The film uses a semi-documentary approach and self-referentiality to comment on the role of cinema in both documenting the nation's history and creating its self-image. The idea is vividly illustrated when the filmmakers, Jorge and Martina, who are facing the consequences of *El Corralito*, continue editing the documentary of *Bar El Chino*. While the filmmakers edit the documentary, they watch on television

images of the social unrest triggered by the crisis (Figure 5). According to Grimson and Kessler (2005), the impact of these socio-economic changes on the ways in which the nation imagined itself was significant:

The Argentine crisis, images of which went around the world in 2001 and 2002, marked the collapse of an economic and social model and also the eclipse of a set of social images and narratives regarding the place of Argentina in the world (2005: 3).

While the film uses images of the crisis and tackles the experience of unemployment, street protests, and emigration, the footage of the documentary edited by the protagonists is very much concerned with less immediately political markers of national identity: shots of Argentine food, in particular barbecues, interviews with Argentine artists, and, ultimately, the tango. Bringing the testimonials set in the past to the time of the fiction narrative, which is perhaps one of the most dramatic moments of contemporary Argentine history, recuperates some national narratives that seemed lost during the crisis. In other words, by juxtaposing the present of the 2001 crisis with footage showing interviews with the owner, his family, customers, and singers in the bar, *Bar El Chino* is implicated in charting the fragmentation of national discourses while constructing them at the same time.



5. Jorge and Martina, two Argentine filmmakers, are framed editing the commercial video for a Spanish company and the footage of the documentary of Bar El Chino, while watching the breaking news of social unrest. Through self-reflexivity and self-referentiality *Bar El Chino* comments on the role of Argentine filmmaking in the context of the crisis.

Through its self-reflexivity, the film also negotiates Argentine culture between the local and the global and tackles issues such as Argentine cinema's dependence on foreign funding, in particular on Spain, as well as its historical status as part of the 'Third World'. This status is acknowledged by the Argentine filmmaker, but not with the anti-colonial thrust that characterised Third Cinema. Instead the filmmaker appears to accept this relatively unproblematically. For instance, in one of the first sequences Martina and Beto discuss sending material to Europe in a taxi on the way to Bar El Chino. Beto sees a group of poor people rummaging through the rubbish in order to eat and suggests: 'what about a clip about poverty and kids eating out of the garbage? That sells in Europe'. This sequence offers a critique of the ways in which images of poverty and crisis are provided in order to comply with a paternalistic gaze, a critique that finds an echo in Ivana Bentes's 'cosmetics of hunger' (2003), in which suffering associated with Third World status is not contested, but consumed. Spaniards are also there to remind Argentina of their Third World status, an idea that is vocalised by Jorge when he talks to Jesús on the phone, saying: 'That is the living cost of the First World'.

Together with the recurrent concern with the displacement of Argentine filmmakers in Spain due to the unfavourable conditions of film production in Argentina, *Bar El Chino* shares another theme with films dealing with emigration in the context of the crisis: the shared desire to leave Argentina. Such a desire, which is present throughout the film, is vocalised at the very beginning when Jorge's friends take him to Bar el Chino to celebrate his birthday. In the sequence in question, his friends ask him to make three wishes, a character suggests that he wishes for his son, a 26 year old artist living in Spain, to return to Argentina. The other character says that Jorge cannot wish that because it was last year's wish, making fun of the wish by saying 'let's wish that his son takes him there, it is completely rotten here'. Comments on Argentina's crisis are also vocalised in testimonials of the footage: 'We think economic crisis is only Argentina's patrimony, but it is everywhere. We are used to thinking that bad and good things only happen to us'. However, the film has a paradoxical approach to national identity: while it clearly acknowledges its 'Third world'/ colonised status, Argentine 'pride' informs the narrative. Such pride is often

associated with the European heritage, as will be further developed in this chapter. Falicov argues that 'while it (Argentina) has historically aimed to distance itself from its Latin American neighbours by invoking its European immigration origin story it cannot escape its position in world geopolitics, economic stability or geographic location' (2007: 5). Indeed, *Bar El Chino* treats European culture as integral to Argentine national identity while exposing the unequal transnational trade experienced by the Argentine filmmakers. In fact, in *Bar El Chino*, Spanish characters epitomise neocolonial opportunism, or the 'hegemony conditions' of Spanish film producers, in Villazana's terms (2008), in the context of the crisis in Argentina. For instance, Argentine filmmakers have to edit a commercial video for a Spanish company in order to fund their documentary, which stands for national culture. Jorge does not get paid for his video because the Spanish highway company finds it 'risky' to invest in Argentina. In the sequence that Jorge learns the company will not buy the video, the VHS tape falls on the floor. Jorge then gets the video tape from the floor, a sequence that suggests that the work of Argentine filmmakers is undervalued and in need of rescue. Moreover, like *Martín H*, the film also engages with the displacement of the filmmaker: Jorge studied in Madrid and, at the end of the film, Martina, who is unemployed, has little option but to accept Jesús's job offer in Spain. Because of its self-reflexivity in addressing filmmaking in Argentina, the film poses questions for the analysis of both the position of Argentine cinema in a global system and international coproductions, which as discussed in Chapter 2, tend to dismiss the national framework as well as the imbalance of power between the countries involved.

The film stages the struggle between art and the market, as the characters need to finish a video of highway construction work for a Spanish company, 21st, in order to produce an independent documentary on Argentine culture. This debate is clear when the Spanish producer tells Jorge: 'this is business not cultural funding'. Moreover, Jorge hesitates to show Martina the material, saying that making the documentary arises for him from social and personal motives and not commercial ones. This art/market dichotomy together with dependence on foreign funding, which, in the film, does not operate in a fair trade system, also testifies to the erosion of the nation state in the context of neoliberal economics. The film constructs a critique of the impacts of neoliberalism formally, by interweaving the footage of the video for the Spanish company, in which a presenter announces the improvements in the highway

in Argentina, and the images of the crisis in the news. The conflicting discourses of these two pieces of footage suggest that the foreign company has no social commitment to the country in which they are investing. Such a critique is also echoed when Martina is fired from the television company. She says that the list of people to be dismissed came from the United States and nobody knows who wrote it. Here, the film charts an important transition that appears to inform some contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films: the 'enemy' is no longer the oppressive State, as in the avant-garde filmmaking of the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, it is not possible to identify the physical source of people's suffering in the global economic system. The 'enemies' are now the consequences of privatisation and economic deregulation, which in the film is ultimately signified in the figure of the Spanish businessman. At the beginning of the film, an Argentine character comments on the way in which Jesús, a Spaniard who studied filmmaking with Jorge in Madrid and works for a Spanish production company, approached Martina: 'Spanish people are always trying to conquer America'. Indeed, on the surface, the narrative creates boundaries between Spaniards and Argentineans and vice-versa, by using terms that relate to fixed notions of national identity such as 'Spaniard' and 'compatriot'. However, the film also exposes how these two cultures and identities can merge. We learn that both the first owner of the bar was Spanish and Chino was of Spanish descent, indicating that the bar, the signified locus of national narratives in the film, has Spanish heritage. Of greater relevance however is the moment when an Italian character explains the origins of tango, which does not have exclusively Spanish or European heritage, as it embraces other cultures that formed Argentine national identity. In this regard, Jonathan C. Brown argues that:

Sons of immigrants at the turn of the century began to reject their parents' heritage and embrace '*lo argentino*' (that which is Argentine). A leading proponent of a return to Hispanic values in Argentina was Emilio Becher, grandson of a Dutch immigrant. José Razzano and Carlos Gardel, sons of immigrants, in 1917 became the leading innovators in the revival of traditional 'Creole', or gauchesque, music. This singing duet was managed by another immigrant's child, Max Glucksman (2010: 154-55).

Likewise, the approach to the relationship between tango and national identity in other films such as *Martín (Hache)*, *Tangos, the Exile of Gardel (El exilio de Gardel: Tangos*, Fernando Solanas, 1985) and *The Tango Lesson* (Sally Potter, 1997) suggests that not only immigration, but also the experience of displacement is embedded in this national marker. As *Bar El Chino* is implicated in the process of remembering and stresses the nostalgia that is present in the tango, heritage becomes a theme when Jorge's son seems to have inherited Jorge's father's talent for making puppets. The puppet made by Jorge's father appears throughout the film, as it is hung by the hall of entrance, and many scenes show Jorge or Martina opening and closing the door. The puppet was named after the Argentine musician Aníbal 'Pichucco', stressing the significance of the tango for both national and family memory. 'Homelessness' is a condition which also becomes a heritage in countries founded on immigration. In some contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films, not only has the younger generation undergone the experience of displacement, but also their grandparents and parents. Like his son, Jorge is an artist, who also emigrated to Spain, a recurrent pattern in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema. For instance, the films *Martín H*, *Lost Embrace*, *A Place in the World*, *The Hungarian Passport*, and *Foreign Land* engage with the displacement of more than one family member. In *Bar El Chino*, this notion of 'displacement' as inherited completely undermines almost all family ties that Jorge has in his home country: his son, ex-wife, and girlfriend are all in Spain. At the end, we learn that his son will have a baby in Spain. This understanding of national identity also complicates the binary of national and transnational that appears in much contemporary scholarship (as argued in Chapter 2) as immigration is engrained in national identity. The binaries between national and transnational and centre and periphery of capitalism often associated with Europe and Argentina appear to merge in Argentine identity to the extent that Jorge admits his heart beats in both Argentina and Spain: 'tick here tick there'.

Like Argentina, which received a wave of immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, *Bar El Chino* is an 'in-between' space (Bhabha, 1994), where Argentine identity is formed. According to Bhabha, these 'in-between' spaces 'provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and

contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself' (1994, 2). Like *Bar el Chino*, other contemporary Argentine films have privileged a bar, a restaurant (*Inheritance*), and even a shopping mall (*Lost Embrace*), as settings that stage the immigrant's experience, in particular, in Buenos Aires. Although their minimalist approach to microcosms of identity negotiations and their focuses on individual stories, these contemporary representations of immigrants do engage with national discourses on immigration. For this reason, I will place representations of the European immigrant within historical discourses on Argentine identity and its European heritage. In Chapter 7, my exploration of regional identity will also engage with contemporary representations of immigrants in Argentina. However, discourses surrounding immigration appear to differ according to the ethnic and racial group to which the immigrant belongs. Falicov explains these different perceptions of national identity: 'some favour a European-influenced cultural identity that emulates a Western, industrialised, urbane culture' while the other predominant discourse 'embraces what can be typified as the "Latin American perspective". This world-view sees Argentina as being much like its regional counterparts, that is, as a "developing" country with limited financial resources' (2007:4).

While the wave of immigrants from neighbouring South American countries, in particular from Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay, is a more recent phenomenon, immigration from Europe to Argentina is usually associated with the past when the country was considered a land of opportunities, a discourse that became remote during the economic crisis. Unlike the *Fish Child* and *Bolivia* (analysed in Chapter 7) that deal with the racialised prejudice experienced by Paraguayan and Bolivian immigrant workers in Argentina, *Inheritance* portrays white European immigrants, who despite at first facing an inhospitable Buenos Aires, manage to integrate more easily than the border immigrants. This is clear if parallels between the films *Inheritance* and *Bolivia* are drawn, as both films take place primarily at the immigrants' respective workplaces, a restaurant and a bar. Although bar and restaurant are similar working environments, the dynamics of work and the negotiation of identities take place in markedly different ways in the films. Firstly, the European immigrant character owns the place while the Bolivian immigrant is illegal. The representation of the working space in *Bolivia*, the use of grainy black-and-white

film, and the lack of external shots differ from the representations of the restaurant in *Inheritance* as a comfortable and familiar place. Such contrasting representations perhaps echo Argentine national discourses that evoke European heritage in order to differentiate themselves from neighbouring countries. Because they direct racial and ethnic questions at the myth that Argentine national identity is 'Europeanised', 'homogeneous' and 'white', or as Page puts it, 'Argentine exceptionality' in Latin America (2009: 111), the immigrant from a neighbouring country blurs the discourses that separate Argentina from Latin America. In this regard, Grimson and Kessler explain certain discourses in Argentina of European heritage and racial purity:

The global process acquired a dynamic of its own in Argentina, considered by many Argentines – and Latin Americans as well – to be a 'European enclave' with no blacks or Indians. This is, of course, another half-truth: although a large number of Argentines did 'descend from ships' (both physically and metaphorically) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in fact a significant part of the population was not Argentine in this sense at all. Rather, it was essentially the same sort of population that dominates the makeup of other Latin American nations. Ethnically invisible in Argentina, its specific ancestry had essentially been expunged when it was socially and politically incorporated into the import substitution economic model and Peronism (2005: 118).

The narrative that Argentine identity 'descends from ships' comes to play in a great number of contemporary films, in particular the ones that portray Argentine characters going to European Embassies in order to prove their 'Europeanness', as explored in depth in the next chapter. Investigating how this notion of European inheritance, which is also present in the very title of the film '*Inheritance*', is central to Argentine national narratives will hopefully provide insights into the filmic analysis of this chapter as well as Chapters 5 and 6, in which I analyse the ways in which films engage with migration from Argentina to Europe and vice versa. The opening scene of *Inheritance* shows a woman in a poorly lit room, lying in bed and singing a melancholic song in what appears to be an Italian dialect. This sequence is followed by the image of an airplane landing. The airplane is white and blue, the colours of the Argentine flag, and has 'Aerolíneas Argentinas' (Argentine Airlines) written on it.

Subsequently, jazzy extra-diegetic music is introduced when a young man is framed under the 'Arrivals' sign. The close-ups on the signs at the airport such as 'Arrivals', 'Taxi', 'Hotel', and his uncertain bearing indicate that Argentina is an unfamiliar place to the character (Figure 6). In addition, the close-ups on

These two sequences introduce the main characters of the narratives, Olinda, an Italian immigrant who owns a restaurant in Buenos Aires, and Peter, a German who went to Buenos Aires in search of an Argentine woman he met in Europe. However, before the German and Italian characters' encounter, the narrative builds by juxtaposing sequences set in Olinda's restaurant with sequences that portray Peter's first experience in Buenos Aires. For instance, there are many shots of Buenos Aires, where Peter is striving to find his way around, and then a sequence of Olinda cooking in the restaurant. The gnocchi, basil and the red and white checked table cloth that she uses to set the tables, all symbols of Italian cuisine, confirm her Italian identity, which was suggested in the opening sequence. The jazzy soundtrack that features in the sequence at the airport is re-introduced in the sequences where Peter is walking around Buenos Aires, giving the narrative a vibrant comic tone. The comic approach to Peter's experience continues when he is framed from the peephole after knocking on someone's door and the misunderstandings caused by his poor use of Spanish. Significantly, in Argentina, a tourist like Peter would be easily labelled a *gringo*, a word used to denote foreigners and highly associated with white tourists from developed countries that become easy targets for criminal activity. It is largely assumed that *gringos* are naive, as they originate in a 'civilised' country where they do not experience crime to the same degree. It is clear that at the beginning of the film the representation of Peter's first experiences in Buenos Aires comply with the way that *gringos* are perceived in Argentina, and more generally, Latin America. The song, the comic tone that accompanies the lost character, the close-ups on signs of hotels, and his use of the Spanish language that usually leads to misunderstandings signify him as the non-Argentine 'other'. The *gringo* stereotype is also reinforced when he is robbed and he is left without money and cannot pay for the hotel. His 'otherness' also reflects on the representation of the city of Buenos Aires: the camera shows what he sees from the bus when he first arrives and in the sequences when he sleeps on the street he observes a darker side of Buenos Aires, as the police search suspects. The idea of Buenos Aires as inhospitable is also

conveyed when Olinda tells Peter that Buenos Aires ‘eats you alive’. Nevertheless, *Inheritance* is the only film selected for this thesis featuring images of places in Buenos Aires that have a tourist appeal. Peter meets a young woman who takes him to see key touristic attractions, including for instance, the Obelisk, a symbol of Buenos Aires that was built to celebrate the city’s hundredth anniversary. The Obelisk is also central to Argentine narratives of nationhood, as *tangueros* consider it a part of the tango landscape (Chris Goertzen and María Susana Azzi, 1999: 7), and it was situated in the famous Avenue 9th of July, named after Argentina’s Independence Day. Significantly, the Obelisk was built by a German company G.E.O.P.E. — Siemens Bauunion — Grün & Bilfinger. In other words, it is an Argentine landmark created by Germans.



6. The construction of Buenos Aires as a transitional place is shaped by Peter’s ‘otherness’.

Afterwards, the German character fixes the water tap and Olinda turns to the Argentine character and says: ‘learn how to do it’. The notion that the foreigner needs to ‘teach’ locals implies a national sense of inferiority that also comes to play in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*. Fernão Ramos argues that as a consequence of the inequality gap that has characterised Brazil’s history, the representation of the lower classes mirrors the sense of guilt felt by the upper middle class filmmaker,

whose heritage is that of 'a feeling of responsibility for the terrible living conditions endured by the countries' poor' (2003: 66). This 'bad conscience', in Ramos' terms, generates a feeling of low self-esteem, which in turn, shapes the way the middle class filmmaker represents Brazilian individuals as 'incompetent' in order to defend themselves. In other words, filmmakers criticise the nation as a way to defend themselves against the critique they are offering. Within this understanding, the upper middle class filmmaker finds in the figure of the foreigner a way to criticise their own society whilst simultaneously remaining outside the critique. The recurrent presence of the foreigner, in particular the Anglo-Saxon foreigner, according to Ramos, serves to 'provide a point of comparison to the configuration of low self-esteem, to measures of national incompetence' (2003: 66). Although Ramos' critique was situated within the Brazilian context, the figure of the foreigner in *Enheritance*, which is also directed by a middle class filmmaker, appears to echo Ramos' argument. This point of comparison is clear when the German character talks to the Argentine waiter about jobs in Germany, impressing the waiter with the salaries there. The German character works more efficiently than the Argentine waiter and for this reason it is Peter who occupies Olinda's position when she leaves for Italy. It is worth mentioning that the stereotype of northern European immigrants as more hardworking than the native ones links back to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's thoughts in *Facundo: Civilisation and Barbarism* (1945). From a historical perspective, not only are northern European immigrants largely associated with hard work, but also European immigrants in general, as Brown argues that in the 19th century 'European immigrants participated in the economic improvements to a greater extent than did Creole (native-born) laborers' (2003: 157). Interestingly, the German character is also the one to introduce 'cinema' as a topic in the narrative: 'Do you like cinema?' he asks the Paraguayan woman. He then talks about the documentary traditions in Germany (perhaps conveying a sense of the filmmaker's own admiration). The notion of cinema being brought to the narrative by a German character is also present in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*.

The encounter between the two European characters also has a comic tone: she is talking with the waiter and throws a plate in the air which accidentally hits Peter as he enters the restaurant. She asks 'where did this man come from?' and they argue in two different languages. Olinda identifies with Peter and, although she

does not allow him to stay in the restaurant at first, she eventually gives in, as she feels sorry for him. She then finds out that like her when she first came to Argentina, Peter came in search of an Argentinean whom he fell in love with. Their identification is clear when the camera frames both of them at different ends of the table, talking to each other, eye to eye. She shows him a picture of her when she was young and explains 'it is an Italian who arrived just like you'. The encounter and subsequent identification with another European makes Olinda re-evaluate her life in Buenos Aires. Olinda, who immigrated after the Second World War, felt that she lost her Italian identity, in part due to her fast integration into Argentine society. As Grimson and Kessler put it, at the turn of the 20th century the 'Argentinisation of European immigrants became part of the progress promised by the nation. In spite of its conflicts and contradictions, then, the immigrant process was an integral part of the story of how the Argentine nation was born' (2005: 8). As Argentine identity is founded on blending with immigrants, it appears that to a character like Olinda, it is a 'natural course' to become completely integrated and even an 'Argentine'. For instance, she drinks *yerba mate*, a drink largely consumed by Argentineans, and has a perfect Argentine accent. Olinda is also 'Argentine' when it comes to facing the problems that marked Argentina's recent history. For instance, she is confronted with the Americanisation of neoliberal Argentina when the waiter who works for her leaves the restaurant for a fast-food place called 'King of Hamburgers'. In this sequence in which Olinda visits the fast food restaurant, we see through her perspective how she had to adjust to contemporary society in order to keep the restaurant, which she plans to sell. The camera focuses on the standardised menu and the way in which food is served, creating a striking contrast with the close-ups on the dishes prepared by Olinda. The critique implied in the sequence in question recalls Ritzer's notion of 'McDonaldisation' (2000),²⁷ which takes a fast-food model in order to argue how cultural processes are more quantifiable than subjective. The 'McDonaldisation thesis' also stresses how society focuses on efficiency and speed, making workers behave similarly because of timing and the standardisation of structures in place. In *Inheritance*, the sequence set at the 'King of Hamburgers' shows how the protagonist experiences this consequence of globalisation and how she has difficulties adapting to this model, as the dining experience she offers at her restaurant is dramatically

²⁷ McDonaldisation is also concerned with global cultural homogenisation, as fast-food restaurants have become increasingly global.

different to the McDonaldised norm. In regard to the uniqueness of the protagonist of *Inheritance* in contemporary Argentine cinema, Rocha states that:

Olinda is one of the most interesting characters in recent Argentine cinematography. She is the only female immigrant who is a longtime resident of Buenos Aires and is shown without a nuclear family. In addition, Olinda represents a community of Italian immigrants which, although one of the most sizable in Argentina, has not enjoyed considerable attention on the part of Argentine filmmakers (2008: 132).

Another contemporary film that engages with many of the discourses pertinent to this chapter such as the notion of inheritance and prosperity associated with European immigration is the film *O Quatrilho* (Fábio Barreto, 1995), which was nominated for a foreign language Oscar and was heralded as marking the rebirth of Brazilian cinema. The opening titles of *O Quatrilho* explain the context of the story thus:

Having left their nation in search of better days, large waves of Italian immigrants headed to the distant America²⁸ in the second half of the last century. A good part of these adventurous migrants reached the port of the extreme south of Brazil, where they, their sons and their godsons built a prosperous society initially based on small rural property, and, subsequently, on commerce and industry.²⁹

In the above text, it is possible to flag up important ideas that are often associated with Italian immigration in South America: the ship (to draw attention to the point once again, as Grimson and Kessler point out, Argentineans refer to themselves as 'descendents of ships'), the aforementioned notion of European inheritance (sons, grandsons) and the creation of a prosperous society. Although

²⁸ Here America is understood within the context of Italian immigration during the 19th and 20th centuries. The expression 'fare l'America' is a well known phrase used by Italian immigrants in order to say they would make it in the Americas.

²⁹ 'Deixando sua pátria em busca de melhores dias, grandes levas de imigrantes italianos dirigiam-se à distante América na segunda metade do século passado. Uma considerável parcela desses aventureiros aportou no extremo sul do Brasil, onde eles, seus filhos e netos, construíram uma sociedade próspera, baseada na pequena propriedade rural e, posteriormente, sobre o comércio e a indústria'.

Olinda does not have children, the fact she is a woman acquires an important meaning within the articulation of inheritance. In both case studies in Chapter 5, *Lost Embrace* and *The Hungarian Passport*, it is the protagonists' grandmothers who are the sources of European 'inheritance'. In *Inheritance*, Olinda leaves the restaurant for Peter to manage whilst she is away. Significantly, the German character does not have a strong maternal bond, as he says that his mother left for Spain when he was young. The confession emphasises the importance of Olinda as maternal figure, which the character did not have in his home country and found in Argentina, more specifically in 'Europeanised' Argentina. The feminine space of the restaurant becomes a locus of reterritorialisation of the European immigrant in Argentina and the German character has a 'happy ending' in Argentina, thereby continuing some national narratives that endorse the 'Argentinisation' of the immigrants as a 'natural' path. Nevertheless, the meeting with another European character makes Olinda question her identity and memory to the extent of inspiring her to visit Italy. In regard to changes in the ways in which the European immigrant is represented in Argentine culture, Medina argues that:

Theatre and cinema have provided a great quantity of immigrants who are proud to be Argentine and identify themselves completely with the nation that has hosted them and allowed them to prosper. This trend has started to change over the past years, in particular, in the cinema, where we can find an increasing number of films that re-examine the representation of the immigrant who arrives in the country, settles down, 'Argentinises' themselves, and lives happily ever after (2007: 103).³⁰

Indeed, although the film ends with Olinda leaving a young European immigrant in charge of her restaurant, thereby restoring continuity with discourses on European heritage which have characterised Argentine history, Olinda questions her identity and memory and decides to visit Italy to recuperate memories such as the name of her school, which she cannot remember. Significantly, she buys an Italian

³⁰ La narrativa, el teatro y el cine han provisto cantidades numerosas de estos inmigrantes que se enorgullecen de ser argentinos y se identifican completamente con esta nación que los acogió y les permitió prosperar. Esta corriente ha empezado a cambiar en los últimos años, especialmente en el cine donde encontramos un número, cada vez creciente, de películas que revisan la presentación del inmigrante que llega al país, se establece, triunfa, se 'argentiniza' y vive feliz para siempre (2007: 103).

newspaper in Argentina and sees that there has been an earthquake in her hometown in Italy. After this, she decides to come back to see what was destroyed. The metaphor of lost identity is evoked through the image of the land, as her Italian identity was also shaken and her memories forgotten. This point becomes clear when at the end of the film she says that her family home in Italy does not exist anymore and that ironically it became a restaurant, suggesting that both in Italy and Argentina her home is a restaurant. Before leaving to Italy, we see her looking at her Italian passport, which became a reminiscent element of her identity prior to displacement. Two months after she leaves for Italy, as indicated by the subtitle, the camera frames the postcard she sent to a customer, with whom she has a more intimate relationship. The close-up on the postcard is accompanied by Olinda's narration in voice-over, explaining her impressions of Italy and telling him that she finally remembered things she forgot about, including the name of her school. In terms of displacement, the message conveyed by the film is that it is harder to recuperate your identity when you return with a different point of view. As she says, the town is the same but different. We see the impacts of her words on the Argentine character. However, we never see Italy, which confirms that the main concern is the portrayal of the immigrant character in the Argentine context.

Escaping Modernity: *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*

Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures charts the story of a German man, Johann, who moved to Brazil in order to escape the Second World War in 1942. The film is structured as a journey across *sertão* undertaken by Johan, who encounters a Brazilian *sertanejo*, Ranulpho. It is yet another contemporary film that re-visits the *sertão* in order to explore the civilisation/ barbarism dichotomy. Johann is undertaking a journey around semi-arid areas in the north-east projecting a short film in order to sell aspirins to locals when he meets Ranulpho, a north-eastern man who wants to migrate to Rio de Janeiro. Like *Central Station*, *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* takes the form of a road movie to narrate the story of a city-dweller who leaves modernity and goes to the *sertão*. Although fantasies of precapitalist society also inform the spatial practices of the *sertão* in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, the film does not focus on Johann's self-discovery, as he seems to be secure of his

decision not to fight the war. Unlike Dora who goes through a 'rebirth', Johann had a strong anti-war feeling prior to his experience in the *sertão*. I argue that the narration of the encounter between a *sertanejo*, an emblematic figure in Brazilian culture (as discussed in the previous chapter), and the German character, who immigrated to Brazil to avoid fighting in World War II, is yet another example of how the relation between Europe and Brazil has a more complex treatment in the film than that of a simple binary. At the same time the film consolidates the rhetoric of the European 'civilising' influence through the German character; it exposes a different side of Eurocentric notions of progress.

Using the background of World War II, which created visible global flows from a number of nations involved, the German character works as a reminder of the value of Brazilian citizenship and the myth of Brazil as a 'peaceful country', two themes that are also addressed by Kogut's grandmother in *The Hungarian Passport*, as explored in the next chapter. We will see how in *The Hungarian Passport*, Kogut's grandmother talks about her husband's endeavour to acquire a Brazilian passport, and thereby reminds Kogut of the value of Brazilian citizenship in the context of the Schengen Agreement, which whilst abolishing internal borders in the EU, created physical and discursive boundaries between European citizens and its other. Argentine and Brazilian contemporary films also show how Argentine and Brazilian citizenship, and thus the passport, are 'devalued' in comparison to citizenship of European countries. I will also show how some of the films analysed in this thesis have testified to this devaluation and the consequent attempt to acquire a European passport that enables EU 'others', Argentine and Brazilian in this case, to enter the 'fortress'. The importance of this chapter is to give a background to the understanding of Argentine and Brazilian experiences of displacement, and show how discourses on citizenship and belonging, which are ultimately represented by the passport, vary according to the historical period. Unlike the character in *Foreign Land* who sells her Brazilian passport because it is 'worth nothing' in the words of the European buyer, in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* it is the European character who leaves his passport behind. Focusing on the experience of the European immigrant in Brazil is a way to challenge the current discourses of Europe as a fortress, as during the Second World War, many European immigrants were trying to be naturalised as Brazilian. I argue throughout this thesis that the passport is a recurrent

motif in contemporary Argentine and Brazil films. In regard to how the value of the passport can vary according to history, Argentine sociologist Sarlo argues that ‘when being Argentinean does not mean work, or food, or time, it is worth little to be Argentine. Nationality is not only imaginary. It is rooted in its material inscription on bodies’.³¹ Such a notion of materialisation is central to this thesis, as characters seem to be in a less or more vulnerable position according to the value of their passport at a particular time, which also problematises notions of central and peripheral identities.

If World War II and its consequences in Europe, and to a certain extent in the USA, have been explored in depth, very few films bring together World War II and South American history. In regard to this also, the film places Brazil in a transnational context, by situating the action at the time of this important historical landmark in world history in the *sertão* and, thereby, placing European concerns in the margins of a country that occupies a marginal position in a global capitalist system. Other contemporary Brazilian films such as *Olga* (Jayme Monjardim, 2004) and *The Hungarian Passport* also engage with the largely unexplored role that Brazil played in World War II. Although the historical context of the film is a Brazilian nationalism where Germans were the enemies, the film completely subverts the national discourses that mobilised the nation in 1942. The nationalist discourses are foregrounded by the Aspirin company’s short films projected by Johann, as they engage explicitly with discourses which are characteristic of Vargas’s era, such as the ‘wonders of Brazil’ and modernisation of the country. The radio too establishes a background to the narrative, providing the dominant discourse that is constantly subverted by the characters. For instance, after the radio announces that the Brazilian government has declared war against Germany, the characters, drunk, pretend that they are in a battlefield, fighting against each other. As they enact the scene, they make jokes about the discourses of otherness established by war, referring to each other as ‘that German’ and ‘that Brazilian’. While in a wider background discursively they are enemies, in the film they help each other. Such a playful approach reveals how the discourses of national sovereignty do not necessarily take place at a grassroots level. In the film, the major problem facing the

³¹ ‘[...] cuando ser argentino no significa ni trabajo, ni comida, ni tiempo, vale poco ser argentino. La nacionalidad no es sólo imaginaria. Se arraiga en su inscripción material sobre los cuerpos’ (2001:18).

German character was the state and its rules at a top-down level, not Brazilian individuals persecuting him.

Clearly the film also engages with issues relating to the Brazilian context, in particular the nationalism that marked Brazilian history during *Estado Novo*, another issue raised by *The Hungarian Passport*. The nationalism in the background of the narrative is also conveyed by the diegetic songs that aggrandise Brazilian nature and the film entitled 'the Wonders of Brazil' projected by Johann that contains images of nature such as waterfalls (it appears to be Iguazu falls). It is worth mentioning that Brazilian natural landscapes are central to Brazilian national narratives. For instance, the Brazilian national anthem associates the 'greatness' of Brazil with its natural resources. Of course, nature in the lyrics of the songs played by Johan's radio does not refer to the arid *sertão* showed by the film. Once again, there is a clash between what is heard on the radio and the 'Brazil' seen on the films and what we see. In subtly showing that the continuously mentioned nature in nationalist discourses does not correspond to that of the *sertão*, the film thereby emphasises how the region does not fit discourses on modernity. It is precisely the perception of the *sertão* as pre-capitalist that attracts the German character. This is clear when the camera frames the sky followed by a shot of him lying on the grass. The *sertão*'s starry sky acquires special meaning, as moments before the German character tells Ranulpho that in the *sertão* 'there are no bombs falling from the sky'. Nevertheless, the film exposes a darker side to rural simplicity as it also focuses on the struggles of a *sertanejo*. For instance, Ranulpho does reassure Johann that he was safe from the war in the *sertão*, not because he romanticises the *sertão*, but because he acknowledges that modernity does not reach the area for better or worse: 'not even bombs reach this backwater'.

In examining the role played by the foreigner in the construction of the nation as 'unviable' in contemporary Brazilian cinema, Fernão Pessoa Ramos argues that '[i]n some of the films of the revival, sinister pleasure is taken in using foreigners (in particular an Anglo-Saxon) gaze upon the country as a reference point when developing the unviable nation' (2003: 74). Indeed, Johann becomes a point of comparison, as he represents modernity and stands for the 'civilised' foreigner amongst poorly educated Brazilians. For instance, he teaches the Brazilian character

how to drive his truck and how to operate the projector. However, the construction of the German character goes beyond that of the condescending foreigner, as he is put in the same harsh conditions that Brazilians are and he also has to learn from Ranulpho, who helps him to thrive in the environment, in particular when Johann is bitten by a snake. The fact that not only Brazil is the 'unviable nation', in Ramos' words (2003), but also Germany, gives the characters' relationship more depth, as it is not only based on inferiority and superiority. Nonetheless, Ranulpho makes comments on the 'inferiority complex', in particular regarding the *sertão's* backwardness. At one point, he makes the same critique but not only in relation to a region, but to the whole country: 'Not even war reaches Brazil', suggesting the marginal position that the country occupied in the world's geopolitics. Therefore in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, this configuration of centre and periphery is destabilised both at a national (*sertão* and south-east) and international level (Germany and Brazil).

The film clearly engages with the notion of the *sertão* being the margins, a notion vocalised continuously by Ranulpho. It is worth mentioning that during the *Estado Novo* period Getúlio Vargas prioritised not only industrialisation in the south-east region of Brazil, but also political centralisation. In one of the short-films, images of São Paulo are introduced by a voice-over narration that says: '[t]he city of São Paulo presents itself to the eyes of the uniformed outsiders as the unequivocal product of extraordinary human virtuosity. At a glance, we encounter examples of discipline, perspicacity, energy and qualification that characterises the people who are implicated in a mission to civilise the world'. The voice-over narration provides the background to the discourses informing the film, establishing in particular what was understood as progress, which again is signified in the south-east as the 'civilised', modern and hardworking environment.

National discourses that treat the *sertanejo* as the uncivilised 'other', as seen in the previous chapter, also have an impact on their self-image. For instance, Ranulpho sees his people and the environment as backward and wants to migrate to the coast. Ranulpho is very conscious of the *sertanejo* stereotype and when he lies to Johann saying that he has been to Rio de Janeiro, he describes it as an experience marked by prejudice and marginalisation in the then national capital. The

way in which he narrates his experience on the coast is so plausible that, like Johann, the spectators do not question its status as truth until the moment he reveals he has never been to Rio. However, the film does not overdramatise nor romanticise his life in the *sertão*. In fact, the character's comments, usually through irony, bring a comic tone to the narrative, which differs from films set in the *sertão* that sometimes adopt a melodramatic approach to suffering, or in the words of Bentes, 'lachrymose humanism' (2003: 122).

The film pays homage to the creation of cinema, showing the German character carrying the apparatus to project moving images to the *sertão*. In the films, cinema itself functions as a signifier of modernity and there is a concern with its reception in the pre-capitalist *sertão*. Cinema and consumerism are interrelated, as the short films advertising aspirins constitute a marketing strategy. When the film is rolling, the camera frames the spectators watching the film. Such concern with its reception and impact on the spectators provides an anti-capitalist critique, as the short films are used to exploit the proletariat. Ranulpho comments on the mass audience response by saying that 'even people who do not have headaches will start having them'. Such a critique becomes even clearer when a local businessman who is interested in Johann's business envisages himself getting richer with aspirin. The character who refers to himself as a businessman is considered by Ranulpho and locals as a *coronel*, a sort of feudal lord who owns land and political power. The figure of the north-eastern *coronel* is usually associated with political oppression and violence. His friendship with Johann empowers Ranulpho, as he accuses the character of being a *coronel* and tells him that he will only 'exploit people'. Ranulpho's critical awareness towards the moving image develops in two ways. Firstly, he is a highly critical and skeptical character, who would not easily believe in the slogan for aspirins as written on Johann's truck: 'The end of all evils' ('O fim de todos os males'). After having his first contact with short films, he seems to be driven by both fascination and skepticism to see the equipment in Johann's truck. He then observes the machinery and plays with the film roll. In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin argues that: 'The film makes the cult value recede into the background not only by putting the public in the position of the critic, but also by the fact that at the movies this position requires no attention. The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one' (1999: 749). While for film

spectators those accessories were extraneous, his awareness of their existence hindered their illusionary impact on him. Acknowledging the machinery contributes to the character's realisation that like aspirin, cinema was a business, a realisation that differentiates him from the rest of the locals and allows him to become Johann's assistant. Secondly, his very faith in the efficacy of the advertised product is non-existent, as he says admits that he took some aspirins but it did not work. Such a self-conscious approach to the power of film itself also links to the historical background of the narrative. Of course cinema when inserted in the historical context of the narrative not only mobilises the masses for consumerist purposes but also for purposes of propaganda. In one of the short-films, it shows women in a factory followed by the intertitle 'Aspirins bringing the future' ('Aspirinas trazendo o futuro'), thus suggesting that aspirins, cinema and modernity – the 'future' – is brought by the German.

The experience of modernity is intrinsic related with the emergence of nation-states shaped by the First World War and the Second World War. In rejecting nationalistic discourses that fuelled the war, the German opts for a backward and archaic society over modernity. However, the film does not offer pre-modern society as a desirable alternative either at a narrative or at a formal level. For every anti-modernity feeling Johann has, Ranulpho has a counter-point, providing a balance of perspectives. Ranulpho suggests many times that not even the 'evils' of modernity arrive in the *sertão* and stresses the difficulties of living in a marginal position. In fact, what both characters have in common is that regardless of their different experiences of modernity, they are highly critical towards their homelands, and therefore have physically moved away from them. This balance is also underscored by the narrative closure, as the characters go in opposite directions. Johann takes a train in an attempt to hide in the Amazon forest, and Ranulpho plans to embark on a journey southward bound, a traditional migratory path in Brazilian history and culture, as explored in the previous chapter.

Conclusion

The subject-matter of the films analysed in this chapter is not only pertinent to Argentine and Brazilian cinema, but also to the exploration of questions relating to

memory and identity in Europe. Recent debates on European culture tend to dismiss the allegiances between European cultural groups and nations with other countries outside the EU. In dealing with European identity as integral to Argentine and Brazilian identity, an idea also explored in Chapter 5, the films also testify to decentring identities and, to a certain extent, culture, as the film itself engages with the relationship between European and Argentine/Brazilian culture. Despite this 'decentring' of culture and identity, in the films *Inheritance* and *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, modernity remains predominantly associated with the European character whilst backwardness with the Argentine/Brazilian characters. Apart from the obvious point in common, which is the German character who prefers either Argentina or Brazil to their home country, *Inheritance* and *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* engages with the relationship between cinema and modernity. In both films, it is the German character who brings 'cinema' to the narrative either discursively or physically. Perhaps it echoes the notion that Europeans are the ones who possess the 'original' culture. Moreover, in both films, the German characters are depicted teaching the Argentine/Brazilian characters either to fix a tap as in *Inheritance*, or to drive a truck as in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*. The notion that Argentine and Brazilian characters have to learn from the European ones appears to link back to a sense of self-inferiority which has its origins in the countries' history of colonialism and was perpetuated by Argentina and Brazil's historical position as dependent countries in global capitalism. This argument bears similarities to Ramos' analysis of the interactions between the foreigner and the Brazilian characters in the film *Four Days in September*. According to Ramos (2003: 81), in order to comment on the national 'incompetence', the film adopts 'the posture of humility', depicting the foreign character with more depth and maturity than the Brazilians surrounding him.

It has been argued that European immigration plays a very complex role in discourses of Argentine nationalism, as it distances them from the 'more indigenous' and 'multiracial' Latin America. As Page puts it there is an 'imaginary axis between *européista* and *americanista* policies that continues to haunt present-day constructions of Argentine identity, poised between its Latin American and European heritages' (2009: 131). In dealing with both its European heritage and its Third World status, *Bar El Chino* challenges the conflicting notions of Argentina either as the European enclave or as a part of Latin America. It can be argued that the economic

crisis rendered Argentina's marginal position in the global economy visible and, once confronted with their 'not so European' situation, Argentina identified with its neighbouring countries. In *Bar El Chino*, while European culture is portrayed as integral to Argentina, there is a discursive boundary between Argentine cinema and Spanish funding, as Spaniards are accused of neocolonial opportunism in the context of the Argentine crisis. Similarly, in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, cinema is used as means of business and also related to opportunistic practices employed by a foreign company, Aspirin, in poverty stricken north-east Brazil.

The role of cinema and of the media in general is explored by the films. Not only does the media have an impact on the lives of the characters, but it also serves as a background to the narrative, in particular in *Bar El Chino* and *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*. The footage of the news showing the demonstrations and social mobilisations engendered by *El Corralito* set a background context to the story of the Argentine filmmakers who are struggling to finish a documentary on tango, a key element of Argentine cultural identity. In *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, it is through the radio that both the characters and the spectators learn about the political conflicts and the nationalist discourses that marked the time of the narrative. In *Inheritance*, it is after reading a newspaper that Olinda finds out about the earthquake in Italy, which functioned as a metaphor for her shaken memories and identity. However, unlike *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* and *Bar El Chino*, which engage more directly with cinema, projection and reception in the former and production in the latter, *Inheritance* does not open space for self-reflexive readings. In fact, the media in general acquire a more complex meaning in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* and *Bar El Chino*, as the narrative historical and political background is established through the use of media, radio and television news, respectively.

Another significant similarity between the three films is the occurrence of the 'unexpected encounter', in Xavier's terms (2003). Although Xavier explores this feature within the context of contemporary Brazilian cinema, which has often been characterised by accidental encounters between individuals from different social classes, he also argues that this motif plays an important role in the dramatic structure of other national cinemas, as '[w]anderings, travelling characters, unexpected cross-cultural encounters are frequent in today's cinema' (2003: 49). In

Inheritance, the German walks into an Italian immigrant's restaurant and is hit by a dish. He then finds out that she left the country for the same reasons that he did, as both fell in love with an Argentinean. In *Bar El Chino*, a lonely filmmaker goes to a tango bar and meets a young female filmmaker, who wants to continue the documentary that he started. Finally, in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, a German citizen escaping from war meets an inhabitant of north-eastern Brazil and they both help each other. The insight of European characters into how Argentineans and Brazilians negotiate national identity in the context of the crisis is of great importance. In order to analyse these encounters it is important to take into account both the time of the narrative and the time in which the films were made in the 2000s. Considering the time in which the film was made, a time when both Argentine and Brazilian cinema were engaged in a process of re-constructing national identity, the European immigrant works as a reminder of past and even lost narratives that treat Argentina/Brazil as attractive countries. *Inheritance* and *Bar El Chino* engages with historical discourses that consider European immigration as a part of Argentine identity while *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* depicts Brazil as the destination of many Europeans trying to escape the socio-political problems in Europe. Foregrounding the persistence of some discourses on European immigration dating back to the beginning of the 19th century will hopefully provide a better understanding of my exploration of the symbolic impact of Argentine and Brazilian emigration to Europe and the drawing and redrawing of discursive boundaries between Argentine/Brazilian and European identity and culture, which I explore in depth in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5. The 'Europeanness' of Argentine and Brazilian cinema

The hypothesis underlying this chapter on the Europeanness of Argentine and Brazilian cinema is that these cinemas, which are often labelled 'peripheral' or as Third cinema can be considered integral to European culture and identity. In this way, the argument acts as a contribution to the decentring of cultural studies. As in Chapter 4, the films analysed in this chapter, Daniel Burman's *Lost Embrace* and Sandra Kogut's *The Hungarian Passport*, portray European immigrants in Argentina and Brazil and thus provide insights into issues of Argentine and Brazilian national identity during a period in which the countries experienced an economic crisis that intensified a wave of migration to Europe. *The Hungarian Passport* has been selected as a case study because its self-reflexive approach to issues of migration, loss and displacement challenges dominant discourses of European identity and culture in the context of the European Union. *Lost Embrace*, on the other hand, has been chosen not only because of its aesthetic and thematic relevance, but also because of its reception both in Argentina and elsewhere as a Jewish film. Whilst the *The Hungarian Passport* is a documentary that records the filmmaker's own attempt to acquire a European passport, *Lost Embrace* is a fictional feature film with a first person narrator that charts the story of Ariel, a young Jew, who sees his Polish ancestry as a way to claim European citizenship in order to emigrate and thus escape his problematic family and the economic stagnation of Buenos Aires. The films also testify to the transition of Argentina and Brazil from nations that have historically been host countries of European immigrants³² to countries of emigration. Both films call upon Jewish diasporic identity and memories of the protagonists' European grandmothers who migrated to Argentina/Brazil during the Second World War, thus juxtaposing the different migration movements from and to Europe. In engaging with stories of diaspora³³ and bringing to light the problems that caused

³² According to historian Jose Moya, more than 6 million Europeans migrated to Argentina and more than 4 million to Brazil between 1820 and 1932. These flows, originating mainly from Spain, Italy, and Portugal, lasted for several decades. Other Europeans such as Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians, migrated as well, although in smaller numbers (Moya in Padilla and Peixoto, 2007).

³³ The term diaspora in this chapter is used to refer to the dispersion of the Jews in the context of the Second World War, and the films in question are made by Jewish filmmakers who explore a collective memory of persecution and displacement. It is worth mentioning that the term 'diaspora' has expanded in relation to globalisation theory. Ritzer argues that 'diasporasation and globalisation are

Europeans to migrate to Argentina and Brazil in the past. They thereby question the notion of 'fortress Europe'³⁴ stressed by the separation of Europe from its 'others', a separation whose codification was reinforced in recent history by the Schengen Agreement.³⁵

The impacts of globalisation in these films, in terms of subject-matter, aesthetics and production will be discussed in light of issues relating to diaspora and transnationality. Stephane Dufoix argues that diaspora shares with globalisation 'processes such as the shirking of the world, a disembeddedness of time and space, glocalisation, instantaneous communication, the reshaping of geography and the spatialisation of the social' (2007: 314). This approach to diaspora as a transnational process will be adopted to analyse two coproductions with European countries made respectively by Argentine and Brazilian directors. These films can therefore be seen as complicating the application of labels such as Argentine, Brazilian, Latin American, and European to films. In order to investigate the ways the films self-consciously engage with their own transnational status as cultural products, my analysis of the films will also consider the location of the filmmaker and the implications that their location has in their work, in terms of narrative, visual style, characters, and subject matter, within the theoretical framework established by Hamid Naficy of an 'accented cinema'. Furthermore, postcolonial theory provides valuable insights for the refiguring of discourses pertaining to an imagined community formed by European countries and European 'others' (in this case Argentina and Brazil).

Challenging fixed notions of European and Latin American cinema

The title of the present chapter, 'The "Europeanness" of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas', raises the question not only of the nationality of those coproductions selected for study, but also the nationality of the filmmakers

closely linked today, and since the latter will continue to develop and expand, we can expect more and more dispersals that are, or at least are called, diasporas' (2010: 322).

³⁴ An analogy with similarities to 'Fortress Europe' is that of the 'wall around the West' (Andreas and Snyder, 2000), which emphasises how new borders have been replacing the old ones.

³⁵ Whilst the European Union opened internal barriers within the Schengen area, its immigration policies created new external borders, strengthening discourses that divorce European identity from its 'others'.

themselves, given that they are of European descent. It suggests not only that European identity is embedded in national narratives, as argued in Chapter 4, but also that there is a 'Europeanness' in Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, which can be found in the themes, traditions, and practices of production of those cinemas. In this respect, the films are selected deliberately to problematise fixed and 'official' versions of European identity and culture in the context of the European Union. One scholar to acknowledge such a division is Tim Bergfelder who, in 'National, Transnational or Supra-national Cinema: Rethinking European film studies', proposes that:

[...] the characteristics of European cinema, by any definition, should include liminality and marginality. Given Europe's traumatic historical trajectory in the 20th century, this should not be too controversial. Yet it is worth noting that, while the influence of exile and immigration have been readily acknowledged as essential to the multicultural composition of Hollywood, migration has not become an equally integral element in the discursive construction of national cinemas in Europe itself (2005: 320).

One of the major problems of using geographical location, in this case, continents, as the criterion for distinguishing between individual cinema traditions is that it overshadows specific relationships between individual national cinemas in Europe and Latin America. Considering that there is a tendency among European scholars to define 'Europe' in opposition to its 'others' without justifying or exploring the implications of such a move, I argue that because these two films can be understood within both an Argentine/Brazilian and European tradition, and that the identity of European cinema is therefore fluid and multiple. From this perspective, it is essential to consider whether certain national cinemas within Europe are better able to enter into dialogue with Argentina or Brazil than with that of other European cinemas. The large number of coproductions between the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America can also be seen as a challenge to rigid notions of European cinema. It is this complexity that problematises apparently helpful labels such as 'Latin American' and 'European' when applied to cinema. Nevertheless, before the problematic nature of such labels can be addressed, it is necessary to explore the terms in greater detail. In the 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World', a document proposed by the European Commission', quotes the following line by

Swiss writer Denis de Rougemont in order to emphasise the importance of unity when promoting a cultural-political agenda:

Culture is all the dreams and labour tending towards forging humanity. Culture requests a paradoxical pact: diversity must be the principle of unity, taking stock of differences is necessary not to divide, but to enrich culture even more. Europe is a culture or it is not' (2007: 2).

Rougement's 'paradoxical pact' also relates to the ways in which cultural policies, funds and festivals face the challenge of preserving and promoting a specific identity, whilst at the same time pursuing principles of cultural diversity. In a globalised context therefore, the notion of an 'imagined community', as conceived by Anderson, is simultaneously necessary and contradictory when framing the culture of a particular country or continent. For this reason, any type of homogenising discourse surrounding collective identity is challenged throughout this thesis. Given that the purpose of this chapter is to look at the formation of supra-national communities, in particular between countries from different continents, discourses pertaining to other imagined communities, such as regional (Mercosur and EU) and national (Hungary and Brazil, Argentina and Poland) are analysed for the degree to which they exist in perpetual conflict and can expose the contradictions of the homogenizing way communities are imagined. In other words, imagined communities based on discourses of 'Argentineness', 'Brazilianness', 'Latin Americanness', 'Europeanness' and 'Jewishness' are constantly in tension whilst at the same time complementing each other. The difference between the supra-national community in this chapter and those analysed in other chapters is that this type of community is not limited to the level of the nation-states. Whilst Lusophone/Ibero-American and Mercosur/EU consists of member states, the cultural identity of diasporic communities is formed by a transnational imaginary. In his influential study *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha places the concept of imagined community within the context of migration:

[t]he perceptual (and cognitive) anxiety that accompanies the loss of 'infrastructural' mapping becomes exacerbated in the postmodern city, where both Raymond William's 'knowable community' and Benedict Anderson's

'imagined community' have been altered by mass migration and settlement. Migrant communities are representative of much wider trends towards the minoritisation of national societies (Bhabha, 1994:316).

Indeed, diasporic communities are an instance of both supra-national and sub-national collective identity and thus challenge national identity. Nevertheless, they also entail the creation of a parallel imagined community with a cultural agenda of, for instance, diasporic filmmaking practices and festivals, thereby fostering a specific collective identity. Recent theory and criticism in film studies has devoted significant attention to exilic and diasporic filmmaking, including Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (2000) and Will Higbee's article 'Locating the Postcolonial in Transnational Cinema: The Place of Algerian Émigré Directors in Contemporary French Film' (2010) on émigré directors working in France. Although such approaches are highly relevant to the analysis of the two films in the present chapter, there is almost no literature on diasporic filmmaking in Latin America. Moreover, in spite of there being a considerable body of work on both films in question, the relationship between diasporic filmmaking and the way these two films engage with the stories of migration and the diaspora within the Argentine and Brazilian context remain little explored. Consequently, the aim in this chapter is to analyse these two productions in the light of recent theoretical debates on diasporic cinema.

In his influential study, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001), Naficy groups under the term 'accented cinema' the work of filmmakers in exile and diaspora, who, in general, originate from less developed countries. This 'accented cinema' is not only marked by the foreign accent of the displaced filmmakers and the speech of diegetic characters, but also by the increasingly transnational practices that have transformed the nature of filmmaking. Although Naficy's theory 'accented cinema' is best known for the analysis of films made by directors whose displacement is due to economic or political reasons, there are three reasons why I decided to apply this theory to the work of Kogut, an upper class filmmaker who was allowed to live in France without a European passport. Firstly, although it is unusual, Naficy's use of exile explicitly incorporates those in 'voluntary exile': '[I]n this study, the term "exile" refers principally to external exiles: individuals or groups who

voluntarily or involuntarily have left their country of origin and who maintain an ambivalent relationship with their previous and current places and cultures' (2001: 12). Secondly, as an immigrant (even though not experiencing the problems that poorer immigrants do, Kogut is still an immigrant in France, and thus, she should not be precluded from Naficy's use of 'exilic filmmaker'), Kogut articulates political and identity issues from an interstitial position and through mechanisms very similar to the ones identified by Naficy and explained in more detail in this chapter. Moreover, it is Kogut's economic class and ability to cross borders that allows her to make such a transnational film; as Bauman points out the 'wealthy and the powerful were always more cosmopolitically inclined' (1998: 12). Thirdly, the argument underlying my analysis of the film is not centred on the reasons why she decides to acquire a passport, but how registering her journey to acquire one exposes bureaucratic obstacles while simultaneously shaping the very filmic text. Instead of dismissing Naficy's theory because of the filmmakers' economic class, my enquiry will focus on the key features that the films in question share with other accented films of travel, the inclusion of identity documents as key motifs, the portrayal of transitional and transnational places and spaces, authorship and aesthetics.

In search of a European Identity: *The Hungarian Passport*

The Hungarian Passport (*Um Passaporte Húngaro*) is a coproduction between Brazil, Belgium, Hungary and France. It is directed by Sandra Kogut, a Brazilian artist of Hungarian descent who had previously worked in television and installation art both in Brazil and in France, where she lived for more than a decade, including the period in which she filmed this documentary. A highly experimental and original film, *The Hungarian Passport* is an account of Kogut's own endeavour to acquire a Hungarian passport prior to Hungary's entry into the European Union. The documentary is composed of footage collected in different places and contains interviews with people ranging from employees of the Brazilian National Archive and Hungarian Embassies in Paris, Budapest and Rio de Janeiro, to family members, in particular her Austrian-born grandmother, Mathilde, to whom the film is dedicated. The narrative positions Kogut at its centre as a postcolonial diasporic subject who challenges bureaucratic and rigid notions of identity and exposes how migration laws

can be arbitrary and inconsistent in a transnational context marked by a global flow of people.

In the light of recent theoretical debates on postcolonial and diasporic cinema, Kogut's displacement – both as the granddaughter of Jewish refugees and a foreigner in France – permeates the structure of the documentary in terms of narrative, visual style, characters, subject matter in a way which sheds light on the problematic notion of belonging and nationhood. What follows will explore how the documentary's fragmented visual and narrative construction uses the journey as a self-reflexive strategy to create a transnational imaginary, and thereby interrogates fixed notions of national identity and culture. The documentary addresses issues such as memory and history while contextualising the problems inherent in the process of displacement deriving from prejudice and the arbitrariness of the power held by bureaucracy. As a coproduction between Brazil and three European countries, made by a Brazilian filmmaker resident in France and entitled to European citizenship, *The Hungarian Passport* raises questions regarding national status and the cinematic tradition to which it belongs and in which it is received. The film destabilises fixed notions of cultural identity and national cinema, while posing metacritical questions to the analysis of transnational films. Within the framework of 'accented cinema', Naficy argues that:

[v]ast global economic and structural changes since World War II have ushered in the postmodern era characterised in part by massive displacement of peoples the world over, creating a veritable 'other worlds' of communities living outside of their places of birth and habitus. Transnational filmmakers not only have given expression to these other worlds but also have enriched the cinemas of their home and adopted lands (1996: 120).

Given her highly fluid identity, Kogut indeed maintains a distinct position within both European and Brazilian film cultures and industries, and thus benefits from ambiguities that enrich her journey, as well as the possibility to reinvent herself. Moreover, she inscribes in the documentary the experience of being in what Naficy terms an 'interstitial location', which means to be 'located at the intersection of aesthetic systems, languages, nations, practices, cultures' (2001: 291). Therefore,

the diaspora is considered here not only as a theme inscribed in the film, but also as a component of style. Through the use of self-reflexivity, the documentary engages with its maker's own interstitiality and features a 'double consciousness' (to use Naficy's terms), which is acquired from both cinematic traditions in which the documentary is inserted:

[t]his double consciousness constitutes the accented style that not only signifies upon exile and other cinemas but also signifies the condition of exile itself. It signifies upon cinematic traditions by its artisanal and collective modes of production, which undermine the dominant production mode, and by narrative strategies, which subvert that mode's realistic treatment of time, space and causality (2001: 22).

Bhabha argues that 'the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorise cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical formation' (1994: 3). Although Kogut is a cosmopolitan person, who can freely cross borders, and her 'degree of mobility' (Bauman, 1998: 86)³⁶ is in Bauman's words that of those who are 'high up', she still offers an articulation distinct from the European one and instead from an outsider's perspective. Living as an artist in Paris, Kogut occupies a position both within and outside European culture. For instance, whilst Kogut's documentary, in terms of production and theme, is an example of European cinema, it is a coproduction with Brazil and offers a commentary on Brazilian history and society. Documentary is, according to Lúcia Nagib, 'a growing genre in contemporary Brazilian Cinema' (2003: xxii) and Kogut is often considered to be one of the most important Brazilian filmmakers of the past decade.³⁷

The Hungarian Passport's location in and financing by different countries places it within a transnational context where borders, whether geographical or

³⁶ Bauman in *Globalization: The Human Consequences* argues that travelling has increasingly become a commodity. However, as consumer society is stratified, there exist 'degrees of mobility': those who are "high up" (cosmopolitan elite) enjoying much greater mobility than those who are "low down" (refugees and people from poorer countries that are not easily granted a visa).

³⁷ As well as the experimental work in video and installation art for which Kogut is best known, she also directed the film *Mutum* (2007), which closed the Directors' Fortnight program in Cannes in 2007.

metaphorical, are increasingly blurred and where multiple societies and cultures interact. Kogut's shifting identity creates a sense of simultaneity of place and space, as the distance between Europe and Brazil is shortened by the interplay of the sequences filmed in Paris, Budapest and Rio de Janeiro. This sense of simultaneity relates to key concepts of globalisation theory such as the 'shrinking of the world' (Dufoix: 2007) and 'time-space compression' (Harvey: 1990).

There are two marked temporalities in the documentary: the present, which involves Kogut's endeavour to acquire a passport, and the past, to which her grandmother's stories belong. However, distinctions between 'here'/'there' and 'now'/'then' remain in constant flux and the relationship between Brazilian and European identity is simultaneously defined by both continuity and difference. In this way, the documentary provides a social commentary on both 'here' and 'there' that constantly shifts from Europe to Brazil and back again, and from 'now' (the year 2001) to 'then', induced by her grandmother's memories of the Second World War. In interweaving and juxtaposing stories of migration from Europe to Brazil with those from Brazil to Europe, the documentary blurs national histories, identities and cultures, thereby challenging recent discourses of European citizenship and its 'extra-communitarians'. The ideologies and practices of the European Union, according to Naficy, are instances of creating 'actual, material borders and of drawing new discursive boundaries between the self and its others' (2001: 219). Indeed, such discursive boundaries often apply to 'extra-communitarians' who need documents such as visas and work permits in order to live in the European Union. Naficy defines as 'postcolonial ethnic and identity cinema' a cinema dominated by 'the exigencies of life here and now in the country in which the filmmaker resides' (2001: 15).

The key signifier in *The Hungarian Passport* is the passport itself, which assumes growing importance for Kogut in representing a 'Europeanness' that is bound up with its status as an official paper combining nationality and mobility. Significantly, in an interview for the website 'República Pureza', Kogut admitted that 'living as a foreigner in France, dealing with many papers, I started to have a daily

relationship with them',³⁸ which serves to illustrate how, for non-EU citizens like Kogut who live in Europe, acquiring a passport is not only a matter of identity, but also an important bureaucratic issue. Although the film shares with European cinema a preoccupation with memory and identity, there is a more practical reason for addressing European identity, and that is the need to acquire an EU passport in order to be able to migrate to Europe. Although this study suggests that notions of Brazil as being in the margins are increasingly questionable in a multipolar world order, where new economies are emerging and artists like Kogut are engaged in decentring activities, historically and, most recently, during the 1980s and 1990s, the experience of Brazil was defined by its position as dependent within the capitalist system.

Kogut argues that '[i]f I was making a film just because I wanted European citizenship, I think I would not make a film. I just wanted to make the film because it was something complex, because there was not one single reason, but several'.³⁹ Indeed, Kogut also explores issues such as identity, bureaucracy and anti-Semitism. It is debatable whether the acquisition of the Hungarian passport is the prime objective of her journey, as she does not live or intend to live in Hungary. Moreover, Kogut's personal motivations to obtain a Hungarian passport are never addressed directly. Although the viewer suspects (and her grandmother suggests at the beginning of the film) that her reasons are linked to the prospect of Hungary's entry into the European Union, which occurred three years after the making of the documentary, Kogut opted to keep her motivations obscure. Arguably, this coyness exists in the adoption of a strategy that opposes the logic of spectacle, which frequently governs reality shows and other increasingly popular television programmes that expose people's private lives and satisfy a voyeuristic gaze. Consequently, Kogut's personal matters are much less contemplative than thought-

³⁸ 'Vivendo como estrangeira na França, lidando muito com papelada, eu comecei a ter uma relação cotidiana com isso'. Available at http://www.republicapureza.com.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55 (accessed 09 October 2010).

³⁹ Translated from Portuguese: 'Se eu tivesse pedindo um passaporte apenas porque queria uma cidadania européia, acho que não faria um filme. Só quis fazer o filme porque era uma coisa complexa, porque não havia um só motivo — eram vários'. Available at: http://www.republicapureza.com.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55 (09 October 2010).

provoking, as they raise pertinent issues to contemporary history, which is marked by immigration and displacement.

It transpires that official documents, letters and assorted papers are key signifiers in the documentary, whether they are scattered about her grandmother's desk or to be found on one of the shelves in the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro. The significance of documents and papers is particularly stressed by the sequence in which her uncle recounts how he escaped removal to a concentration camp. As he could not remember his passport number, he guessed a number that, luckily, corresponded to a Portuguese passport. In the film, he holds the piece of paper that saved him and says: 'This is my life'. The role of papers as a form of control is also underlined when the employee of the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro says: 'Once registered, they (governmental bodies) could kick them (the foreigners) out'. In the film, papers are symbolic of different states of displacement: temporary, as at the end of the film Kogut is granted a document valid for a year that proves her Hungarian citizenship, and permanent, as the 'K' stamped on her grandparents' passports meant that they could not return to Hungary.

Deterritorialising and Reterritorialising Journeys

The growing significance of the passport both to Kogut and the narrative also relates to her postcolonial location. The symbolic meaning of acquiring a new passport is linked to Naficy's argument that while exilic and diasporic films are concerned with being, postcolonial ethnic and identity cinema is concerned with becoming (2001:15). The documentary, which was primarily filmed in France, where the filmmaker lived for more than ten years, differs from what is often categorised as postcolonial cinema, such as the work of African émigré directors in France. The main difference is that it does not address issues of the colonial past. Nevertheless, Kogut could be considered an immigrant filmmaker in France, who managed to raise funds both in Europe and Brazil in order to make a documentary that interrogates Eurocentric notions of national identity, history and culture. In exploring her grandmother's memories of the Second World War and thereby revealing Europe's internal conflicts, while simultaneously exposing Brazil as the host country of the

European immigrant, Kogut challenges the articulation of Europe as a fortress. In this context, Kogut enacts and inscribes her interstitial/postcolonial location to expose contradictions – in particular in the arbitrariness of migration laws – and to cross borders both metaphorical and geographical, as the documentary constantly shifts between countries, stories and languages.

Although the documentary addresses political issues concerning Brazilian history and society, as well as engaging with counter-hegemonic narratives that are expressed both aesthetically and thematically, it does not promote any specific political ideology in the way that Third Cinema does. In this regard, Naficy argues that ‘accented cinema is one of the offshoots of the Third Cinema’ (2001: 30), but he points out that the former engages ‘with specific individuals, ethnicities, nationalities, and identities and, with the experience of deterritorialisation itself’, whereas the latter focuses more on the ‘people’ and ‘the masses’ (2001: 31). Hence, as an instance of accented cinema *The Hungarian Passport* tackles a public issue, uses non-actors and has a strong reality effect, but it does not embody realistic ethnographic practices nor does it universalise the lives of either Jews in Brazil or Brazilians abroad. Instead, it is characterised by nonlinearity, fragmentation, and a self-reflexive narrative that involves exposing individual experiences and underlining specific power relations and causes that affect the life of the immigrants, such as border controls, bureaucracy, prejudice and persecution.

Accented filmmakers, according to Naficy, ‘who live in various modes of transnational otherness inscribe and (re)enact in their films the fears, freedoms, and possibilities of split subjective and multiple identities’ (2001: 271). In the filmic narrative of *The Hungarian Passport*, this multiplicity is underscored by ellipses and ruptures that constitute the continuous shifts between places and interviews. Because of Kogut’s travelling identity, the documentary is imbued with images of transitional and transnational places and spaces, including train stations, seaports, vehicles and people waving goodbye on a platform (Figure 7). These images were collected while Kogut was in transit and they are accompanied by a soundtrack consisting of Jewish folk music by Papir Iz Dorkh Vais and Yah Riboh, which thus establishes a nostalgic tone in the narrative. There is a frequent slippage between the footage and the soundtrack, and the experience of displacement is evoked by the

interchange between characters' words and the accompanying image. The images and the soundtrack are often inserted in the narrative during or after Mathilde's interviews, working as if they were memory flashbacks. The use of voice-over also connects those images to Mathilde's narration, creating a sense that these 'non-places' (to use Marc Augé's term), trains, and people that feature in the film belong to her story of migration, when actually they are a register of Kogut's displacement. In this way, Mathilde's memories work as a leitmotiv of Kogut's own journey, and the juxtaposition of two journeys in the same family challenges the fixed meaning of material borders and blurs the discursive boundaries between Europe and its 'other'.



7. Footage of Kogut's journey is used to evoke displacement.

In other words, the film compares times, places and societies by its critical juxtaposition of different journeys. Whereas Kogut's grandparents experienced Europe as a place of persecution and war, Kogut's own generation see Europe as a land of promise, and hence Brazil, once the destination of European immigrants, has now become a country of emigrants. This social shift is underscored by the generation gap between Kogut and her grandparents, as their journeys have opposite directions. The fact that Kogut's journey is a common one in contemporary Brazilian society is underlined when the officials in the National Archive in Rio point out that many Brazilians are currently seeking European citizenship,. Her journey is complex, as it involves a quest and search across different countries, and it reveals itself as composite because it interweaves with the journeys of other displaced people, in both Latin America and Europe. Journey and journeying are, according to Naficy, 'key features of accented cinema' (2001: 222), a theme which is often a concern in European cinema, for it has an 'obsession with transition and change, with narratives of migration and the transgression of borders' (Everett, 2000: 62).

Indeed, in engaging with a journey narrative, *The Hungarian Passport* can be situated within the tradition of European cinema, which, according to Everett:

[...] reflects both the mass movements which have characterised European demographic patterns (particularly, though not uniquely, since the Second World War), and the unstable concepts of geographical boundary and cultural identity which have resulted (2000: 62).

It is precisely this instability of European identity, caused by migration flows from Europe to Brazil during the 20th century, that allows a Brazilian citizen to test her 'Europeanness' and make a documentary about it. In assessing the extent to which she is Hungarian and the extent to which she is allowed to be one, Kogut exposes contradictions, problems and ambiguities in the bureaucratic practices of the embassies in Budapest, Rio de Janeiro and Paris. For instance, the Consul of the Hungarian Embassy in Brazil says that the language test required by the Hungarian Embassy in France was created by the French and similarly, Mathilde tells us how her husband bribed immigrant officials to enter the country, thereby revealing how laws can be relative and arbitrary. In her search for a new form of identity, Kogut embarks on deterritorialising and reterritorialising journeys, which involve a process of transformation as she gradually 'becomes' Hungarian. The closer she is to acquiring the passport, the more she engages with learning about Hungarian culture and history; for example, by documenting her aunt's demonstrations of Hungarian cuisine, and interviewing people who talk about Hungarian history. Moreover, she also learns about the (aforementioned) compulsory language test. However, such 'deterritorialising' and 'reterritorialising' journeys also imply loss. If, on the one hand, displaced people can reinvent themselves and engage with counter-narratives, on the other, they may be forced to make irreversible choices, as immigration laws, along with broader notions of national identity, rely on fixity and exclusion. In this way, the documentary reveals the difference between the cultures appropriated by Kogut, and explores tensions that are triggered by this hybridity. Pertinent to this is Naficy's insight into the process faced by accented filmmakers:

Freed from old and new, they are 'deterritorialised', yet they continue to grip both the old and the new, the before and the after. Located in such a

slipzone, they can be suffused with hybrid excess, or they may feel deeply deprived and divided, even fragmented (2001: 12).

Assimilations of the new, such as learning to speak the Hungarian language and learning about culture and history, can co-exist with Kogut's 'old' identity. However, the issue of assimilation becomes more complex when Kogut questions whether she would have to renounce her Brazilian citizenship in order to obtain the Hungarian passport. Her grandmother, who had previously stated that she had to renounce her Austrian citizenship in order to marry a Hungarian citizen, warns Kogut: 'Giving up your Brazilian citizenship is very serious'. Here, Mathilde, who was persecuted in Europe and struggled to acquire Brazilian citizenship, offers an alternative perspective on the Brazilian passport, which was undervalued at the time of the film's making (a matter explored in the analysis of *Foreign Land* in Chapter 5). Mathilde's on-screen confessions give the viewers an insight into the discursive nature of the boundaries and borders between Brazil and its 'other', in particular because Brazil has historically been the destination of numerous European immigrants. In this respect, Mathilde's perspective challenges narratives of Brazilian national identity. For instance, in revealing the covert anti-Semitism of the Estado Novo and narrating some of her experiences of prejudice in Brazil, Mathilde problematises Brazilian national discourses around the myth that the country has always been friendly and open to immigrants. Jeffrey Lesser sheds further light on this matter when pointing out that 'the insistence that Brazil is a country uniquely free of racism and bigotry, and the realisation by ethnic and racial minorities that prohibiting an attitude does not make it disappear, weaves discrimination, or in this case stereotypes of Jews, deeply into Brazilian culture' (2001: 67).

Self-reflexivity on Displacement and the Filmmaking Process

This autobiographical and self-reflexive documentary engages with its own status as a postcolonial and diasporic film by constantly posing questions about its maker's own 'in-betweenness'. In particular, its narrative and style test the spectator's capacity to divorce identity from traditional categorising elements such as passport and citizenship, products of the official politics of nationhood. In the

opening sequence, while speaking on the phone to the Hungarian embassy, Kogut asks 'Can someone who has a Hungarian grandfather obtain a Hungarian passport?' The sequence introduces the complexity of her identity by demonstrating the inability of bureaucratic services to deal with her case, thereby addressing questions to the audience about the issues raised: if the authorities do not really know how to respond to her questions, the spectator has little chance of knowing the answer. The variety of languages is another self-reflexive element that plays a very important role in the documentary and its reception, and the different accents and languages within the diegesis reflect the making of the documentary as an international coproduction filmed while the director was in transit. Regarding multilinguality⁴⁰ in accented films, Naficy contends that 'subtitling is integral to both the making and viewing of these films' (2001: 123). In this regard, the connections between the places where *The Hungarian Passport* was filmed, the nationality of filmmakers and the people interviewed, are destabilised by the dynamics of transcultural contact. This is because the film features English, French, Hungarian and Portuguese dialogue spoken in a variety of different accents, including Kogut's accented English and French, her Austrian grandmother's accent when speaking Portuguese and her Hungarian uncle and aunt's accented English. Under such circumstances, Naficy argues that the audience of an accented film is encouraged 'to engage in several simultaneous activities of watching, listening, reading, translating, and problem solving' (2001: 124). In enacting the problem of language that she dealt with during the making of the film, Kogut poses the audience the same problem and thus denaturalises classic narrative by offering a commentary on displacement and making a film about displacement.

Kogut's highly fluid identity induces a sense of 'strangeness' that is further emphasised by the recurrence of the word 'weird', a word that is said throughout the film by different people in different languages, including the authorities. This strangeness is present in the film on various levels and not least as an aesthetic mode, as Kogut's previous experience with television and several different genres facilitates her use of textual crossovers in her films. In commenting on the making of the documentary in 35 mm, Kogut states: 'I would never have been able to do this

⁴⁰ According to Naficy, 'multilinguality' occurs when more than one language is 'spoken/titled in film' (2001: 189).

film if I had not used a small digital camera. I intend to do other films in 35mm. I am at the intersection of many things and this is as hybrid as the question of nationality. I have always felt very close to people who work on the frontier'.⁴¹ Pertinent to this is Laura Marks's argument that 'hybridity does not simply turn the tables on the colonising culture: it also puts into question the norms and knowledge of any culture presented as discrete, whole, and separate' (2000: 08). Consequently, in registering the effects of its own making, the documentary addresses the process of filmmaking in a transnational context, and also displays the flaws and imperfections that classical narrative attempts to disguise, such as actions that highlight the filmmaking apparatus—such as people looking at the camera and on-screen comments about the film).

The film's fragmented narrative also challenges the objectivity of journalistic interviews and realist documentary forms, as Kogut does not deny the effects of filming on the people interviewed: 'I started to do everything on my own because having three or four people in the location does not allow a more personal approach'.⁴² In fact, her intervention changes the course of the narrative by emphasising the effect that the act of observing has on the person who is under observation. For instance, the interviews with Mathilde while she is eating and with Kogut's relatives in Budapest take the form of conversations (due to the closeness of the relationship between the two). As a result, family affection highlights the stark contrast between the private sphere and impersonal public places. It is clear from the shots of the endless corridors of embassies and shelves full of documents in the National Archive that individual stories of loss and displacement have been transformed into mere numbers. In specifying and situating displacement, the film's emotional power is enhanced, for, as Consuelo Lins puts it, 'it is a film in which family memory becomes immediately a world-memory' (2004: 76). Mathilde's interviews

⁴¹ Translated from Portuguese: 'Eu jamais conseguiria fazer esse filme se não tivesse usado uma câmera pequena e digital. Pretendo fazer outros filmes em 35mm. Estou num cruzamento de um monte de coisas e isso é tão híbrido quanto a questão da nacionalidade. Eu sempre me senti muito próxima de pessoas que trabalham nessa fronteira'. Available at: http://www.republicapureza.com.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55 (accessed 9 October 2010)

⁴² Translated from Portuguese: 'É um filme em que a memória de uma família torna-se de imediato uma memória-mundo' (2004: 76).

offer lucid accounts of her experience of migration to flee the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War, establishing a tone of greater emotionality. The film's engagement with global issues, including for instance visas, migration, and war, allows different people across the globe to identify with the subject matter and renders the question of its reception complex. Although the film engages with stories of the Jewish diaspora and thus has been included in the programme of Jewish film festivals, including the New York Jewish Film Festival, the documentary does not address solely this specific community. What is more, despite being a coproduction, filmed in different places, the film more often than not has been categorised as a Brazilian film in the programme of many film festivals, such as *Le Festival du cinéma brésilien de Paris*. Therefore, it seems that categorisation in some film festivals has also relied primarily upon Kogut's place of birth. Kogut's interstitial location and postcolonial subjectivity has clearly had some impact on the reception of her films. For instance, on the website of the AWFJ (Alliance of Women Film Journalists), Maitland McDonagh refers to Kogut as 'a citizen of the world', given her several displacements: 'Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1965, Kogut grew up in Brazil, spent more than a decade in France and now lives in the United States'.⁴³

Naficy argues that self-inscription, one of the components of the 'accented style', is a 'modality of performativity and doubling' in which 'the filmmaker appear in their own film, visually or on the soundtrack only, either as themselves or as fictional characters' (2001: 277). Indeed, there is a slippage between identity and performance of identity that renders the narrative multivocal, as Kogut occupies both inside and outside positions or, as Naficy puts it, 'the intersubjective and interstitial spaces that are characteristic of accented cinema' (2001:72). *The Hungarian Passport* is constructed by the interweaving of interviews and unexpected interactions that reflect its very process of production, because the director herself is at the centre of both the production and the narrative. Kogut performs multiple functions in the documentary. Not only did she raise funds to direct the documentary, she also functions as a subject. Despite not appearing in the film in person, her voice is heard off-screen and her presence is often felt through point-of-view shots,

⁴³ McDonagh, Maitland (2004). 'Women on Film — Global Lens Filmmaker Sandra Kogut'. *Alliance of Women Film Journalist*. Available at: <http://awfj.org/2009/01/24/women-on-film-global-lens-filmmaker-sandra-kogutmaitland-mcdonagh-interviews/> (accessed 3 October 2010).

establishing a self-reflexive interweaving of her own person and persona in the diegesis. Kogut's involvement in the documentary also reflects 'the multiplication or accumulation of labor, particularly on behalf of the director' (2001: 48), which is the key characteristic of what Naficy refers to as the 'interstitial production mode'. Furthermore, one of the key characteristics of the accented film, according to Naficy, is 'convolution', where 'funding sources, languages used on the set and on screen, nationalities of crew and cast, and the functions that filmmakers perform are all multiple [...]. This complexity includes the artisanal conditions and the political constraints under which the films are shot' (2001: 51).

As the documentary is a registration of Kogut's attempt to acquire a passport, the obstacles imposed on her bureaucratic endeavour also undermine the film's closure. That is, the uncertainty involved in obtaining the passport and concluding the film suggests that filmmaking itself is a journey that poses complex open-ended questions, just as cinema forms part of the culture through which identity is both imagined and potentially destabilised. In this respect, one of the people interviewed at the beginning of the film addresses the self-reflexivity of the documentary humorously: 'And if obtaining that nationality is a long-term undertaking if not an impossible one, you can count on rolling film for years'. Furthermore, regarding the lack of closure, the documentary poses questions without giving answers, perhaps because there is not yet an official solution to the increase in the numbers of people who are on the move like Kogut. The documentary encourages spectatorial questions, in particular that of whether or not Kogut got her passport, with the absence of a definitive answer undermining the closure of both her documentary and her quest, and stresses that identity formation is an open and indeterminate process.

In sum, this autobiographical documentary narrativises the dynamics of displacement through the diegetic staging of bureaucratic mechanisms of fixing identity and constraining mobility, while creating a visual imaginary that promotes fluidity in the process of identity formation. The transnational imaginary space created by the documentary exposes the rigidity of national frameworks cultural and historical, by showing how they fail to explain the connections between the multiple national contexts presented in the narrative. Consequently, films like *The Hungarian Passport* have the potential to reveal both the diasporic and postcolonial experience,

challenging the national as a privileged site in which cultural identity is conceived. Moreover, through the exploration of issues such as identity, history, prejudice and diaspora, the film reveals the limitations of creating an identity founded on national and historical bases, and attempts to move beyond them. By so doing, the documentary engages with existing debate regarding the process by which identity is constructed through socio-political affiliations and culture, and thus disrupts discourses that separate European identity from its 'others'.

European Citizenship and Escapism: *Lost Embrace*

Although Jewish filmmakers have always played an important role in the film industries of these countries, it is only recently that as a group they have begun to make films portraying the Jewish communities in Argentina and Brazil. In fact, the portrayal of Jewish communities can be seen as part of a trend in contemporary Latin American cinema, judging by recent titles that have received national and international acclaim, including Argentine films such as *Autumn Sun* (*Sol de otoño*, Eduardo Mignona 1996), the Uruguayan film *Whisky* (Pablo Stoll and Juan Pablo Rebella, 2004), and the Brazilian film *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation* (*O ano em que meus pais saíram de férias*, Cao Hamburger, 2006). Moreover, in 2004, Burman joined nine other celebrated contemporary Argentine directors⁴⁴ to make a docudrama, *18 j*, more precisely, a collection of short films of ten minutes each, in response to the terrorist attacks on AMIA (Argentina-Israeli Mutual Association) in 1994. According to Rocha, the young generation of Latin American-Jewish film directors are implicated in a process that she names 'de-hiding', which consists of 'incorporating words in different languages and exhibiting customs that are not widespread in either Argentina or Brazil to mainstream audiences' (2010: 39).

⁴⁴ Adrián Caetano, Lucía Cedrón, Alejandro Doria, Alberto Lecchi, Marcelo Schapces, Carlos Sorín, Juan Bautista Stagnaro, Adrián Suar and Mauricio Wainrot.

Together with *Waiting for the Messiah* (*Esperando al mesías*, 2000) and *Family Law* (*Derecho de Familia*, 2006), *Lost Embrace* (2004)⁴⁵ forms Daniel Burman's 'Once Trilogy'. The trilogy is called 'Once' after the non-official name of the district of Bavaner in Buenos Aires where the films take place and which is known for its Jewish community, evoking in the very title the notion of diaspora. Indeed, from its making to its reception, the Jewish diasporic community forms an aspect of Burman's films. *Lost Embrace* charts the story of Ariel, a young Argentine. The process of 'de-hiding' has not proved to be an easy task for Burman, who is best known for addressing Jewish issues and collaborating with other Latin American Jews, including the actor Daniel Hendler and writer Marcelo Birmayer. According to the online edition of the Argentine newspaper *Página 12*, Burman and Daniel Hendler, the Uruguayan actor who plays the lead role in the trilogy, are known as 'good Jewish boys [...] who are connected to small Hebraic groups'.⁴⁶ *Página 12* also referred to the trio as 'The Three Musketeers' and to their collaboration as 'one of the most fortunate collaborations of Argentine cinema',⁴⁷ illustrating how *Lost Embrace* is framed discursively. If, on the one hand the Jewish 'accent' of the filmmaker and the Latin American 'label' give this film its place in festivals and the film market, on the other, such labelling forces the film into established categories, thus overdetermining its potential meaning prior to its showing. Interestingly, the same article starts with the sentence 'Daniel Burman is tired of the "Jewishmeter"', which playfully suggests that there is a tool that measures the extent to which the cinematic representation of Jews is authentic. As far as Jewishness is concerned, 'He got used to listening to the complaint of an old lady who measures the truth of the Jewish narrations in his films' and consequently admits that after the success of *Lost Embrace*, he tried to avoid exploring themes directly related to Jews, by making the last film of the trilogy, *Family Law*, more about lawyers than Jews:

⁴⁵ According to *Página 12*, *Lost Embrace* is Burman's most successful film ('*Lost Embrace* es el film más logrado de Daniel Burman') <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/espectaculos/6-33206-2004-03-25.html> (accessed 20 July 2010).

⁴⁶ 'reconocibles como "buenos chicos judíos" desde la cuna, en la Argentina o Uruguay (la patria de Hendler), conectados a los grupitos de Hebraica'. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/espectaculos/6-53732-2005-07-16.html> (accessed 10 August 2010).

⁴⁷ Sosa, C. (2004). 'Los tres mosqueteros'. *Página 12*. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-1315-2004-03-21.html> (accessed 6 October 2010).

If now I tell a story about lawyers, I do not think that 1500 lawyers will call me or send me letters saying that instead of the word 'sentence', it should be 'ruling'. This bad habit, which I also have, consists of thinking immediately whether a narrated fact relating to Jewish culture is correct or incorrect.⁴⁸

The problem faced by Burman in representing Jews provides further evidence for Naficy's argument that accented filmmakers carry a 'burden of representation' (2001: 82): 'While the general public may prefer accented films that are entertaining and enlightening [...] displaced communities often demand 'authentic' and corrective representations. Such conflicting demands may 'distort' the accented films, exposing them to criticism from all sides' (2001: 6). In this context, 'watchdog' organisations, in Naficy terms, are formed in order to monitor media representation of a specific group or nationality (2001: 76), forcing filmmakers to face the dilemma of 'how to balance ethnic and national loyalty with personal and artistic integrity, and how to reconcile universality with specificity' (2001:82). Naficy thus suggests that 'each director must determine for herself what constitutes the universal or the specific [...] The localist universalism that is intended here is obtainable only through specificity' (2001:82).

The accusations of 'dysfunctional' representation usually come from the audience's practical wish for self-recognition, which often relates to another problematic of transnational cinema: the impossibility of assigning a fixed identity to film. In respect of this, increasingly, the connections between the place of production or setting and the nationality of the filmmakers and actors are destabilised by the dynamics of transcultural contact. For instance, Burman, of Polish-Jewish descent, born and raised in Buenos Aires, directed *Lost Embrace*, a coproduction between Argentina, France, Italy and Spain and starring a Uruguayan actor. In this globalised context, the nature of the criticisms of Burman's films show that the forces behind transnational cinema (the economics of the market and the politics of national and ethnic representation) tend to create a spectatorial environment that still insists on authenticity. In 'Migrancy and the Latin American Cinemascope Towards a Post-

⁴⁸ Gorodischer, J. (2005). 'Con la mirada puesta más lejos del Once'. *Página 12*. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/espectaculos/6-53732-2005-07-16.html> (accessed 10 August 2010).

National Critical Praxis', Ann Marie Stock suggests a post-national approach to Latin American Cinema, since 'insisting upon the criterion of authenticity may very well bring about the demise of the critical object' (Stock in Ezra and Rowden 2006: 163). According to Stock, 'Post-national practices of making and viewing films demand a critical strategy which does not privilege origins, which does not insist upon purity, and which is not intent on closure' (2006: 161). Accordingly, transnational cinema does not necessarily offer self-recognition to its audience but affects the reception of films, in the following way:

[...] transnational cinema imagines its audiences as consisting of viewers who have expectations and types of cinematic literacy that go beyond the desire for and mindlessly appreciative consumption of national narratives that audiences can identify as their 'own' (Ezra and Rowden, 2006: 3).

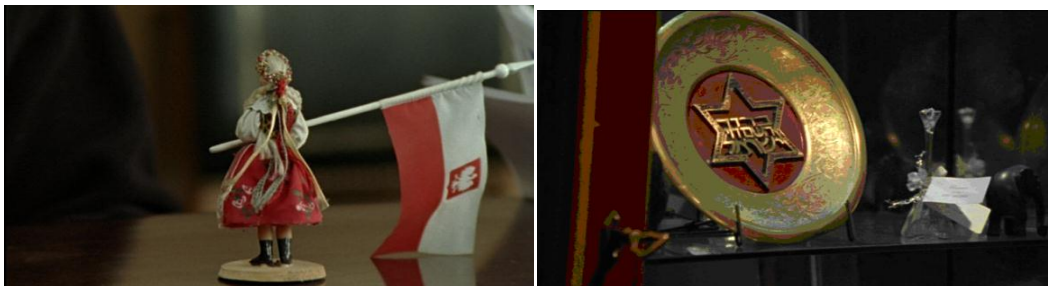
Indeed, Burman's experiences of diaspora and dislocation inscribe on his films other senses of belonging besides the national. Although 'national cinema' should not be dismissed as an unimportant symbolic force, adopting 'accented cinema' as a theoretical framework inevitably implies a form of post-national criticism. In countering the homogenising and enclosing tendency of nationalist thinking in the context of the contemporary politics of 'world cinema', Andrew Higson argues that 'the contingent communities that cinema imagines are much more likely to be either local or transnational than national' (2006: 23). Accordingly, this reading of *Lost Embrace* is more interested in the ways that the local, here represented through the neighbourhood of Once, is framed and negotiated in a global context than it is in thinking solely in terms of Argentine cultural specificity. According to Rocha, the Jewish characters in Burman's trilogy 'seek to balance their identity as Argentine Jews in relation to the identity of older members of the Jewish community and, in the process, they emerge with a synthesis of both cultures' (2010: 40) (sic). Indeed, although the narrative focuses on the story of a young man who belongs to a diasporic community and lives in a multicultural environment, the film also addresses issues pertinent to contemporary Argentine society. For instance, some of the national problems such as unemployment, the decline of family business and

emigration that characterised the Argentine experience of crisis are also addressed by another celebrated film, *Good Life Delivery* (*Buena Vida Delivery*, Leonardo Di Cesare, 2004). The film tackles the experience of homelessness as a direct consequence of the crisis, as suggested by the tagline of the DVD cover of the Argentine version: 'Who said we are in crisis?' (Quién dice que estamos en crisis?). Like *Lost Embrace*, the film focuses on the life of a young male Argentine who experiences displacement on many levels: his brother has emigrated to Spain, a friend is waiting in the long queue in front of the Italian Embassy to acquire an Italian passport, his girlfriend's homeless family starts to live in his house. Bureaucracy in Argentina is portrayed as a failure and the state does not offer protection, not even of private property. In this way, the effects of the economic crisis in Argentina literally invade his house, thereby underscoring the collapse between the notion of private and public.

In *Lost Embrace*, the representation of Once also brings into focus the Argentine experience of globalisation, and in particular the economic crisis that has intensified since the adoption of the neo-liberal model in the mid-90s. The most sizeable Jewish communities in Argentina and Brazil are located in the financial and cultural centres of these countries, namely Buenos Aires and São Paulo, and these diasporic communities have significant participation levels in national life. The film addresses global issues, as it represents a diasporic community at the same time as portraying local concerns, and corresponds to Naficy's views that 'exilic and diasporic filmmakers [...] are situated but universal' (2001: 10). It also upholds the notion that accented films are 'simultaneously local and global' (2001: 4), since they are located at the intersection of nations, cultures, practices and languages:

Like the exiles, people in diaspora have an identity in their homeland *before* their departure, and their diasporic identity is constructed in resonance with this prior identity. However, unlike exile, which may be individualistic or collective, diaspora is necessarily collective, in both its origination and its destination. As a result, the nurturing of a collective memory, often of an idealised homeland, is constitutive of the diasporic identity (Naficy, 2001: 14).

The filmic narrative of *Lost Embrace* is indeed shaped by symbolic boundaries that underscore such a notion of collective identity and ethnicity (Figure 8). The film explores visual markers of difference and belonging, such as the dance performed by Ariel's mother at the Hebrew theatre, Jewish symbols as props of various settings and the Jewish cake *Lekach*, which is mentioned several times, indicating a long-term sense of ethnic consciousness and distinctiveness on the part of both the filmmaker and the characters. The film also articulates the character's sense of belonging to a diasporic community through its portrayal of Once, and the use of point-of-view and first person narration, whilst its narrative ellipsis draws attention to Burman's own interstitial location. In fact, Burman states that his films reflect his own search for identity (Burman in Falicov, 2007:136). However, first-person narration in the voice-over of *Lost Embrace* is delivered exclusively by the protagonist Ariel, despite the echo of the filmmaker's own voice and the use of free indirect speech. This corresponds to Naficy's conception of multivocality and first-person narration destabilising the omniscient narrator of mainstream cinema.



8. There are numerous close-up shots of identity markers in *Lost Embrace*.

Lost Embrace begins with first-person off-screen narration, whilst the handheld camera follows Ariel (Figure 9). The narrator includes himself as a member of the workers in a shopping mall by the use of 'we': 'to customers, we're just salespeople, who disappear when the stores close'. The use of the first person plural at the beginning of the narrative invokes attributes of authenticity and authority as it underscores the speaker's insider status and, to some extent, Burman's authority to represent the neighbourhood he grew up in. Although it is not explicit that the person followed by the handheld camera in the first sequence is the narrator, the point of view shots give this impression. The use of the zoom lens establishes a point-of-view

that alternates from Ariel's to a more objective viewpoint from which we see his discussions inside the store. This strategy that stresses the fact that Ariel is simultaneously a member and observer of that community, the first-person narrator and the protagonist of the story.

Another feature of the film that creates a documentary style and adds a greater sense of authenticity to the representation of Jewish people is the use of non-professional actors. According to *Página 12*, Burman held auditions for people who actually work in Once so they could act in the film. Moreover, Ariel's grandmother is played by the Polish singer Rosita Londner, who is best known for her Yiddish songs and for immigrating to Argentina to escape persecution. The fact that, like the character Ariel, Hendler is Jewish links to Naficy's argument that 'the characters' accents are often ethnically coded, for in this cinema, more often than not, the actor's ethnicity, the character's ethnicity, and the ethnicity of the star's personality coincide' (2001: 24).



9. The handheld camera follows Ariel, who introduces the mall to the spectator in first-person narration. The point-of-view shots correspond to Ariel's comments on what he sees, stressing his insider status.

Lost Embrace uses both a direct and an indirect style. Whilst the former includes the character's speech and point-of-view, the latter conveys Ariel's memories, fears, and thoughts and offers his reflection in the mirror. In addition, there are cinematic instances of free indirect style, such as the point-of-view shots that correspond to what the first person is narrating off screen and the cutaways from the shot of Ariel's back while he walks through the mall during the first sequence. We

do not see the character's face completely until the first-person narrator presents himself as the protagonist of the story, Ariel Makaroff. The free indirect style also includes perception shots: the zooming in and out of the characters in the mall, presenting an objective view of characters and things, and subjecting them to Ariel's perception. After finding out that his mother has a boyfriend, there is a close shot of Ariel's reflection in the mirror together with the voice-over saying 'I have to become Polish. Urgently'. This use of projection and introjections creates an ambiguity characteristic of diasporic experience, as they:

[...] subjectivise the films and their characters may create ambiguities about what is happening on the screen and who exactly are the subjects—that is, the owners or the objects of the gaze, thought, voice and the epistles. Such narrative ambiguity re-creates and expresses the ambivalent subjectivity and hybridised identity of exilic and diasporic conditions (Naficy, 2001:102).

While *Once* is portrayed as an ethnic niche where Ariel is in constant contact with the Jewish community, it is at the same time a neighbourhood in Buenos Aires to which *Página 12* refers as 'Babel', due to the coexistence of people from different backgrounds, including Koreans and Peruvians. Interestingly, in the film, 'Babel' is an intertitle that refers to the name of Elias' favourite shoe shop. In the DVD extras, Hendler describes the mall as a symbol of Latin American social cultural reality: 'It is a metaphor for the Latin American countries that are a mix of immigrants and different cultures'. The film subtly criticises some aspects of this coexistence in a rather ironic tone. For instance, during the salesman's meeting an Italian stereotypes Koreans with the comment that 'they are lighter'. Ariel in response argues 'They'? If I said Italians are loudmouths, would you like it? Isn't it racist?' Ironically, Ariel in voice-over informed the public at the beginning of the film that he actually thinks that Italians shout a lot. Therefore, although Ariel complains about the Italian man's comment, the audience knows he has some preconceived stereotypes too. The film also deals, in a light-hearted tone, with a major Latin American issue treated in Chapter 7: the subordination of certain nationalities and ethnic communities within the region. For instance, the contestants of the comedic race between porters are Peruvian, and Ramón, whose nationality is not mentioned, but whose character has indigenous traits. The assignment of informal jobs to certain nationalities in South

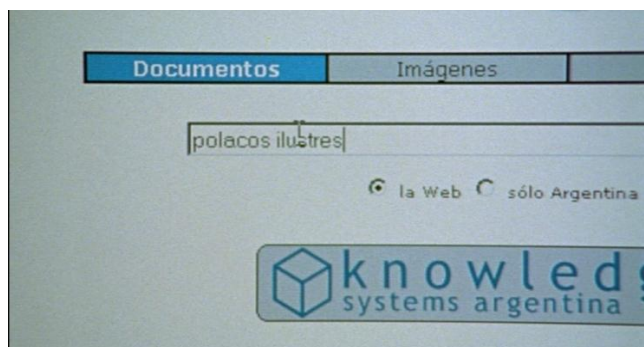
America is also hinted when we learn that Joseph's Paraguayan friend is the maid of his ex-girlfriend. Another socio-political Latin American issue that comes into play is the theme of emigration, not only to the European Union, but also to the United States. The increasing number of Latin American immigrants in the USA is mentioned as being the Rabbi's justification for leaving:

Unexpectedly and miraculously, an important synagogue in the USA wants me to be the rabbi of a large temple in Miami Beach. I'm moving with my wife and son, and I'll be very well paid. I'm to attract the growing Hispanic population and be their spokesman.

The narrative addresses the Argentine aspiration for European citizenship in a playful way by creating a secondary narrative that centres on Ariel's friend, Mitelman, who is also after a passport from an EU member country. When Mitelman suspects he has a Lithuanian grandfather, Ariel asks him: 'Can a Lithuanian be of help?', thereby stressing the fact that a passport is, for him, not a matter of identity, but a practical issue, with nationality not being his primary concern. Ironically, Mitelman meets a Lithuanian girl at the Lithuanian embassy and takes her home as she has lost her passport. At the end of the film, Ariel tells us, in an off-screen voice-over, that 'Mitelman couldn't prove his Lithuanian ancestry. He will have to marry to become European' whilst we see the headline of the newspaper that Mitelman reads: 'Ten more countries were integrated into the European Union today'. The protagonist's attempt to acquire a European passport in order to migrate to Europe, and thus escape both his personal problems and an economically stagnated Buenos Aires, is shown to be well suited to the exploration of boundaries between self and other, notions of 'Argentiness' and 'Europeanness', and between memory and the present. The personal and social problems and economic crises faced by Ariel in Argentina create a feeling of stagnation that contrasts with the liberating, opportunity-rich space that is supposedly present in Europe. More specifically, Ariel wants to go to Europe in order to run away from his frustrations in Buenos Aires, including his abandoned course and girlfriend and his father's absence. The scene in which he is introduced to his mother's new boyfriend is followed by one of several shots of Ariel running through the streets of Buenos Aires, reinforcing the character's tendency to seek to escape his problems. He uses Europe as a grand and deeply rooted referent that

allows him to escape mentally so as not to have to face up to the frustrations of the present. Indeed, after months with the fixed idea of going to Europe, Ariel starts to feel like a tourist in his own neighbourhood and the first-person narration emphasises the protagonist's ironic detachment from his family and community.

The humorous tone of the sequence when Ariel is interviewed also plays with the idea of becoming Polish without having a genuine interest in the country and its culture (Figure 10). He begins by incorrectly pronouncing all the names of Polish celebrities, and then requires a piece of paper to remind him of the things he had previously researched on the Internet, and finally, even though he is a Jew, he refers to John Paul II as 'His Holiness', just to please the interviewer. In addition, when asked what he likes about Poland, Ariel answers: 'I am interested in the climate, the winter'. However, prior to that sequence, he told his brother: 'Europe is fantastic, you can wander all over, eating and reading, but you need 5 sweaters'. In this sequence, the overwhelming nature of the quantity of questions is emphasised by the fast editing and the non-linearity of his responses, as Ariel answers one question after the other, sometimes not even completing the previous answer.



10. Ariel searches for Polish celebrities on the internet before his interview at the Polish Embassy. The close-up on the computer screen shows that he searches in Spanish, using an Argentine search engine, making it clear that his 'Polishness' is questionable.

However, it is not only Ariel's Polish identity that is questioned in the film, but also his Jewish one, with there being many occasions when he is portrayed as

uninterested in religion. For instance, when the rabbi needs to translate his parents' religious divorce settlement into Spanish he is unable to understand Hebrew and in the same sequence, he cannot identify the Jewish year of his parents' divorce in the commercial calendar. In addition, he does not seem to care about his brother's religious stories and goes to the synagogue only to find out about his parents' divorce. As a consequence, there is a continuous interplay throughout the film between elements associated with each of the two communities of Argentine and Jew. For instance, although the prevailing soundtrack is Jewish music, Tango is also introduced into the narrative, it being 'a dance and a form of cultural orientation and a means of personal expression and national identity formation' (Naficy, 2001: 110) central to Argentine culture. Furthermore, in spite of *Lost Embrace* being a Spanish language film, the narrative is interwoven with words and songs in Yiddish and Hebrew, which are transnational languages spoken by Jewish communities all around the world. Language, 'one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality' (2001: 23), comes into play at different levels in the film. Therefore, in mixing the transnational Yiddish and Hebrew cultural elements with Argentine identity markers, more precisely *porteños* (from Buenos Aires), the film furnishes an example of 'glocal' culture and identity (Roberston, 1994), as the narrative engages with the dynamics between the global and the local.

Conclusion

The Hungarian Passport and *Lost Embrace* testify to the Argentine and Brazilian transition from being the host country of European migrants to the intense wave of migration to Europe in the 1990s. Although the films share with European cinemas a preoccupation with memory and identity, they contain a more practical reason for addressing European identity, which is the acquisition of a passport of an EU member country for the purposes of migrating to Europe. Moreover, both filmmakers, born and raised in developing countries, are now tackling a key issue in regard to emigration from Latin America: the search for a new form of identity as a means of leaving these two countries, both of which had become subject to economic hardship. Nevertheless, the films address this issue in an entirely different

way, both in terms of style and content, for whilst Kogut's is a documentary that explores ancestral relations, identity, history and diaspora in order to acquire a passport, *Lost Embrace* is a fiction film that engages with the pursuit of a passport in a playful way. Another notable difference between the two films is that Kogut remains coy about her motivation to reclaim her grandparent's citizenship, whilst in *Lost Embrace* the protagonist's reasons to 'become' Polish are overtly stated.

In *Lost Embrace*, instead of focusing on Argentina or Judaism alone, Burman turns to a commercial shopping mall in a specific neighbourhood of Buenos Aires called 'Once' and charts the individual experiences of the protagonist, Ariel, in order to create 'a thirdspace of alterity, creativity, and insight' (Naficy, 2001:82). Moreover, although Burman is part of the Jewish community and his films are imbued with autobiographical content, he is less interested in an ideological and militant representation of that community than a sociological one. Similarly, *The Hungarian Passport*, instead of addressing anti-Semitism in Brazil and more general issues of Jewish persecution and the diaspora, focuses on Kogut's grandmother's experiences and her own story of displacement. Of significance is that in both films the figure of the grandmother is central for the acquisition of a document and a source to construct Ariel and Kogut's own history and identity, which endorses Naficy's statement that 'the discourse of memory feminised the house as an enclosure of femininity and domesticity, associated with motherhood and production. This is how many exiles feminise the homeland' (2001: 169). In *Lost Embrace*, Ariel lives and works with his mother, underscoring this feminised notion of home. His mother's infidelity was the major trigger to the breakdown of family unity, which may be seen to associate his home in Buenos Aires with a sense of unreliability, a sense that pervades contemporary Argentine films.

The figure of the grandmother also serves to juxtapose different times and cultures, for through their stories the two films tackle the two migration fluxes from and to Europe, by interrogating, articulating, de-constructing and constructing identity and revealing how its 'value' changes according to historical period. As in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, in *Lost Embrace*, it is the European character who wants to get rid of her passport. The films provide another perspective on current discourses

that overvalue the European passport, given that Ariel wants the same passport that his grandmother wants to burn, as she 'is convinced that Europeans want to kill all Jews'. Similarly, Kogut's grandmother explains the 'K' written on the passport by saying that 'when grandpa left the room, he heard someone say 'one dirty Jew less'', with the K meaning 'Kivándorló' or 'this person is leaving once and for all' in Hungarian. The fact that in both films the passport is a key signifier and characters are constantly engaged with reading and writing letters and papers signifies epistolarity, which according to Naficy is another feature of the accented style, involving 'the use of the letter's formal properties to create a meaning' (Altman in Naficy, 2001: 101). Like *Lost Embrace*, *The Hungarian Passport* features intertitles that interrupt the flow of images. Moreover, the documentary is intensely dialogic and explores the intertextual relation of the film text with itself, as it directly addresses its audience, by means of first-person narration, captions and intertitles. In dealing with authority and bureaucracy, the filmic narrative of *The Hungarian Passport* explores the relations between the director as a diegetic addresser and the addressees, usually the public service officials and the interviewees.

These loose papers may refer to exilic epistolarity, or they may symbolise exilic provisionality. In either case, their pervasiveness underscores the importance of 'papers' such as identity cards, passports, refugee papers, work permits, residency permits, social security cards, certificates of citizenship, and driver's license in the life of the exiles – papers that mark their status as exile, refugee, alien, resident, immigrant or citizen (Naficy 2001:109). In *Lost Embrace*, the most significant way that the epistle takes form is the message on an audio cassette that Elias leaves to Ariel towards the end of the film. In this sequence of the film the cassette becomes instantaneous and simultaneous, two of the characteristics that Naficy attributes to the telephone. That is, in this case the cassette, just like the phone, 'obliterates spatial and temporal discontinuity' and allows Ariel to meet Elias by the time he would listen to the message, and without finishing the message Ariel goes to meet him. Elias' decision to record a cassette instead of calling brings into play two other characteristics of epistolarity: inhibition and prohibition. In this regard, Naficy contends that 'because of its live ontology and the concomitant immediacy, intimacy, and intensity, the telephone is most susceptible to both epistolary prohibition and transgression' (2001: 117). Therefore, knowing that the prohibition stems from Ariel's

personal refusal to engage in communication with him, Elias decides to contact him through a recorded medium so as to avoid the intimate and intense interaction that the telephone allows. This use of epistolarity by Elias towards the son who he abandoned is mirrored by that same son's (Ariel's) rejection of Estela, which appears to be ongoing, because of her enquiry as to why he has not replied to her message when they bump into each other. Moreover, the use of footage in both documentaries emphasises how epistolarity creates an illusion of presence. In *Lost Embrace*, Ariel watches the footage of his circumcision, which was the closest he could feel to his father, as that was the only moving image he had of him. Another important feature relating to epistolarity is language, which according to Naficy, 'serves to shape not only individual identity but also regional and national identities prior to the displacement' (2001: 24). Indeed, in their attempts to acquire new passports, Kogut is asked to take a language test and Ariel has problems in pronouncing the names of famous Polish people.

The films analysed here are cultural expressions of diaspora that engage with the largely unknown stories of Jews and Jewish communities in Latin America. The protagonist in *Lost Embrace* and Kogut are both members and observers of the diasporic community, thus stressing the autobiographical content of the narratives. The self-representation of the Jewish community illustrates the filmmakers' own negotiation with their diasporic and migrant identity. In fact, Burman refers to cinema as a 'tool': 'I started to discover the cinema as a way to narrate and transcribe my unquietness and the things I wanted to tell. It works for me as a tool rather than a purpose itself'.⁴⁹ This notion of cinema being a tool of self-expression and self-representation is reflected by the fact that both of these filmmakers were determined to obtain total control over their projects, which involved taking on multiple functions. This regard to performing multiple functions can be viewed as being a proactive strategy, for as Naficy contends: '[b]y performing multiple functions, the filmmaker is able to shape a film's vision and aesthetic and become truly its author' (2001: 49). Indeed, Kogut has said that she preferred to do things on her own to establish a

⁴⁹'Fui descobrindo o cinema como uma maneira de narrar e transladar minhas inquietudes e as coisas que queria contar. Funciona para mim mais como uma ferramenta do que como um fim em si mesmo'. Burman interviewed by Elisa Figueiró (2006)
Available at: <http://www.cenacine.com.br/?p=2171> (accessed 10 December 2010).

closer dialogue with people, as she believed that having a film crew did not allow for a more personal approach.⁵⁰

My analysis of the films has shown that the negotiation of global and local also takes place at the national level, because belonging to a Jewish community can vary according to country. If on the one hand, diasporic identity challenges nation as a framework, on the other the experience of diaspora is shaped by the national context in which the subject is inserted. Therefore, Kogut and Burman's depiction of diasporic communities, whilst belonging to a transnational imaginary, also addresses national identity and history. Furthermore, both filmmakers maintain a distinct position within their national, diasporic and regional film cultures and industries. Going back to the idea of the 'Jewishmeter', it has not been the intention in this chapter to measure the extent to which a film is Jewish, Argentine, Brazilian, Polish, Hungarian, Latin American or European or to define what European, Latin American, and national cinemas are, but to explore how the notions of collective identity represented by the films intersect and conflict, both in relation to narrative and production. Moreover, whilst it has been acknowledged throughout the analysis that embracing Rougemont's 'paradoxical pact' of cultural unity is necessary to create cultural policies and promote cultural products, it has emerged that notions of European and Latin American identity and culture should not be limited to a specific geographic territory.

⁵⁰ '[...] passei a fazer tudo sozinha, porque para conseguir uma relação pessoal com alguém não dá para chegar lá com três ou quatro pessoas'. Available at: http://www.republicapureza.com.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55 (accessed 9 October 2010).

Chapter 6. The former coloniser and the construction of a globalised national identity

One of the ways in which contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema have negotiated new forms of national identity in the wake of the countries' experiences of globalisation is through reference to their former colonisers. Of course this is not a new strategy, as the former colonisers have historically been a point of reference for the colonised subject, who attempts to move away from the colonising culture in order to create a distinctively national culture and identity. In my literature review, I demonstrated how leading theorists have articulated the difficulties faced by the colonising nation and the 'native intellectual', in Fanon's terms, to differentiate themselves from their colonisers and in subverting colonial discourses through appropriation. In this chapter, I argue that this understanding remains important in a postcolonial and globalised context in which discourses surrounding the construction of supra-national communities, including Ibero-American and Lusophone ones, are promoted in order to increase cooperation between the countries.

I will examine the ways in which two films, Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas' *Foreign Land* and Adolfo Aristarain's *Martín (Hache)*, engage with two supra-national identities, Lusophone and Ibero-American respectively, in order to assert new forms of Argentine and Brazilian national identity emerging as a result of newly adopted economic models in the mid 1990s. My choice of these two films for a comparative analysis is primarily because they are instances of recent Ibero-American⁵¹ coproductions that articulate and interrogate the discourses on supra-national communities which informed their making. In doing so, I will argue that the films in question pose metacritical questions for their analysis as coproductions with Portugal and Spain while revealing how discourses surrounding Lusophone and Ibero-American communities depend on the perpetuation of colonial ideologies to construct a shared sense of identity.

⁵¹ This definition of Ibero-American also includes Portugal and Spain.

Both *Foreign Land* and *Martín (Hache)* address Argentine and Brazilian experiences of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, juxtaposing images of the Iberian Peninsula and South America. In terms of narrative, both films are centred on young male protagonists of Spanish, specifically Basque, descent, who have artistic aspirations and are left with little option but to leave their home countries for similar reasons: national and personal problems. The films also testify to the dramatic economic crisis that hit both Argentina and Brazil in the early 1990s and engendered a shared sense of a lack of hope in the nation's future. I will argue that both young artists, whose futures are uncertain, are symbolic of the notion of 'no viable future' that prevailed in Argentina during the 1990s and early 2000s, and in Brazil particularly during the Fernando Collor years. I suggest that the then recently adopted neoliberal economic model had an influence on artistic activities in Argentina and Brazil. The analysis will focus on how the neoliberal economic model on which artistic production depended become a self-referential element in the films, which address the issue of European funding for the arts as well as the experience of deterritorialisation by young artists; perhaps reflecting their makers' (Salles, Thomas, and Aristarian) own experiences of displacement.

Like Chapters 4 and 5, this chapter engages with issues relating to displacement and power in order to reveal the contradictory discourses of the creation of a supra-national community which consists of Europe and its so-called 'extra-communitarians'. As previously mentioned, the thesis contributes to the current debate on transnational cinema by exploring how films shape the ways in which Europeans and Latin Americans share the sense of belonging to the same community. Both films selected for case studies engage with the recent wave of migration from Latin America to Spain and Portugal from an Argentine/Brazilian perspective, and their narratives challenge reductive stereotypes of the Latin American immigrant population found in the Iberian Peninsula's postcolonial present. The textual analysis of the ways in which the communities are imagined in these two films sheds light on issues concerning both the colonial anxiety that informs the stereotypes of Argentineans in Spain, and of Brazilians in Portugal, and the self-representations of Argentineans and Brazilians, who appear to look negatively upon their national populations and cultures. The critical analysis provided in this chapter will also demonstrate that at the same time that the films both reaffirm and subvert

the discourses of the two supra-national communities (Iberoamerican and Lusophone) in question, they also deal with very specific Argentine and Brazilian national concerns, including the financial crisis that marked the post-dictatorship history of both countries.

As the films analysed in this chapter are coproductions between Argentina and Spain and Portugal and Brazil that engage with migration flow from the former colonies to the Iberian Peninsula in the 1990s, a better understanding of them will be gained by establishing the socio-political context in which the films were made. I will, therefore, provide an overview of the transnational film practices and the socio-political agenda that informed film coproduction between Argentina and Spain and Brazil and Portugal. Later, I will show that the films' production is relevant to the film analysis, particularly when films use self-reflexivity as a strategy to pose metacritical questions to the analysis of film coproductions between the countries.

Reverse migration: from Argentina and Brazil to the Iberian Peninsula

The entrance of Portugal and Spain into the European Union in 1986 became a decisive point of reference in the study of contemporary Iberian culture and society. Arguably, given that the colonial ties remain strong (a fact underlined by the films selected for this chapter), Portugal and Spain's adhesion to the European Community became a turning point for the society and culture of their former Latin American colonies as well. The economic boom that followed the integration of Spain and Portugal into 'modern' Europe intensified the demand for workers, making these countries, which were best known as countries of emigrants, economically attractive. By contrast, Argentina and Brazil, which for most of their histories have been characterised as countries of immigration⁵² (as previously mentioned in Chapters 4

⁵² Brazilian history has been marked by very different waves of migration from Europe, including that of the European explorers in the colonising process of the 16th and 17th centuries and those of the European migrants that went to South America in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is these more recent waves of migration that are relevant to some of the characters presented in other chapters of this thesis, including for instance, Olinda (*Inheritance*), Johann (*Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*), Kogut's and Ariel's grandmother (*The Hungarian Passport* and *Lost Embrace*) and in the context of this chapter Paco's mother. More information about the latter migration wave such as the estimated numbers and country of origin are provided in this chapter.

and 5), experienced high inflation and low economic growth in the 1980s followed by the socio-political turmoil symptomatic of the implementation of neoliberal economic policies in the 1990s. As a result, Argentines and Brazilians started to emigrate in search of economic opportunities, often to do low-skilled work abroad, a fact testified to by the films analysed in this chapter. In 'Argentina: A New Era of Migration and Migration Policy', Maia Jachimowicz sheds light on this reverse migration flow between Argentina and Spain. Jachimowicz estimates that Argentina 'received over seven million immigrants, predominantly from Spain and Italy, between 1870 and 1930' whereas 'in 2004, 157,323 native-born Argentines were living in Spain, up from 64,020 in 1999' (2006). According to Jachimowicz, the number of Argentines living abroad doubled between 1985 and 2005. In regard to the Brazilian context, it was not until the military *coup d'état* in 1964 that Brazil stopped attracting immigrants amidst the strengthening of nationalist ideology. In the 1980s, the so-called 'lost decade',⁵³ Brazil became a country of emigrants, and by the 1990s over 1.8 million Brazilians were living abroad (Amaral and Fusco, 2005). As a result of these socio-political changes, the relationship between the Iberian Peninsula and its former colonies in Latin America was affected particularly regarding migration laws. As Beatriz Padilla and João Peixoto have noted 'typically, citizens from former colonies tend to be overrepresented in flows to the countries that colonised them' (2007) and argue that the relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Southern Europe continues in many forms even after the adoption by Spain and Portugal of EU policies, including the Schengen agreement. The close relationship between former colonies and the Iberian Peninsula continued, but in a different shape. For instance, there was a diplomatic crisis between Brazil and Portugal after Portugal signed the Schengen Agreement in 1993 (see Feldman - Bianco, 2001), which introduced tougher controls on migration from former colonies. In order to re-establish their former close relationship in the context of the EU, Portugal

⁵³ The term 'lost decade', according to Márcio Moraes Valença, refers to the "less advantaged" and indebted countries that, subject to the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the erosion of financial support, saw their problems – economic and social – aggravated throughout the 1980s. In regard to the Brazilian context, Valença states that the term was used to refer to the 'country's economic stagnation and mounting social problems' and that '[t]he government of Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-92) incorporated the expression into its rhetoric in order to make it clear that the 'problems' had been inherited from past administrations, especially that of Jose Sarney, whose administration immediately preceded Collor's' (1998: 1)

encouraged the creation of the CPLP, which stands for Community of Lusophone Countries (Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa), whose impact will be discussed in more detailed in this chapter.

Globalisation and Ibero-American Cinema

The re-emergence of Argentine and Brazilian national cinemas occurred at the same time as the socio-economic transitions mentioned above. It is therefore no wonder that contemporary films, in particular the ones made between the mid-1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, testify to the countries' experience of dismal employment prospects and emigration. In a similar way, Portuguese and Spanish cinemas have had to negotiate the shift from being generators of emigrants to receptors of immigrants, and as a result since the start of the 1990s a substantial number of films have portrayed the drastic social changes in these countries. Ryan Prout asserts that:

Until recently, others in Spanish cinema were often the others of internal colonialism or of social prejudice towards gays and gypsies. In recent Spanish cinema, however, the category of the other has also come to encompass immigrants from Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, reflecting changes in the Spanish population that until the 1990s was ethnically homogeneous by European standards. (2006: 725)

Indeed, notable Spanish films such as *Letters from Alou* (*Las cartas de Alou*, Montxo Armendáriz, 1990), *Bwana* (Imanol Uribe, 1996), *Things I Left in Havana* (*Cosas que dejé en La Habana*, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, 1997), *Saíd* (Llorenç Soler, 1998), and *Flowers from Another World* (*Flores de otro mundo*, Icíar Bollaín, 1999) have concentrated on the social and cultural experiences undergone by ethnically diverse immigrants. Spain at the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975 began a process of dismantling the narrative of the Spanish nation that claimed racial, religious and cultural purity. Faced with the interrogation of personal and national identities marked by postmodernity, Iberian society finally began to hear traditionally

marginal voices. In a similar way, Portugal had to negotiate the socio-political implications engendered by the end of António de Oliveira Salazar's regime,⁵⁴ a dictatorship that lasted 48 years. Ferreira locates this concern within the Portuguese cinematic context:

At least twenty films have narrated emigrants' stories in the 33 years since the re-establishment of democracy when the average yearly cinematographic production has totalled twelve feature films. Immigration only became relevant after the Revolution in 1974, which ended colonialism and half a century of dictatorship, and following Portugal's adhesion to the European Community in 1986, which made the country economically more attractive. (2007: 49)

Amongst the notable Portuguese films to take up this subject is Pedro Costa's trilogy, sometimes referred to as the *Fontainhas* trilogy, consisting of the films *Bones* (*Ossos*, 1997), *In Vanda's Room* (*No Quarto da Vanda*, 2000), and *Colossal Youth* (*Juventude em marcha*, 2006). The trilogy, which was an international critical success, was named after Fontainha, a poor neighbourhood in Lisbon, where a large community of immigrants reside. Other films that address immigration, in particular from former colonies in Africa, include *Haircut* (*Corte de cabelo*, Joaquim Sapinho, 1995), *Dribbling Fate* (*Fintar o destino*, Fernando Vendrell, 1998) and *J Zone* (*Zona J*, Leonel Viera, 1998). Furthermore, because this transition took place in a globalised context marked by an increase of transnational filmmaking practices (as discussed in Chapter 2), the dramatic increase in the number of coproductions between Spain and Latin America and Portugal and Brazil also engendered changes in the cinema of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. According to Ferreira, the creation of the CPLP and the Luso-Brazilian Coproduction Agreement (*Acordo de Co-Produção Cinematográfica Luso-Brasileira*), first signed in 1981 and re-established in 1994, aimed at promoting a 'lusophone imaginary' (2008). However, she argues that instead of establishing a dialogue between the two countries, the films produced within the framework of this agreement became a 'monologue' limited by the colonial legacy. Likewise, coproductions between Spain and Latin American countries appear to incorporate an imbalance of power between the countries involved. Libia Villazana

⁵⁴ Although Salazar left his Prime Ministerial duties in 1968, the fall of his regime, known as the Estado Novo (translated as 'New State'), occurred in 1974.

criticises the Ibermedia programme, which she considers together with Paragonik as 'paradigms of the principal finances of film coproduction in Latin America'. Villazana argues for a legislation that acknowledges 'the economic and cultural differences between Latin American countries and Spain' (2008: 70) and accuses the Ibermedia programme of taking advantage of the fact that filmmaking practices in Latin America are cheaper than those in Spain and include the imposition of some rules, including for instance the need to incorporate Spanish actors, that impact upon the films' aesthetics and narratives. The relevance of Ferreira's and Villazana's arguments to this thesis is that they underline how contemporary cinema from both sides of the Atlantic relies on the continuing colonial legacy to promote the culture of an 'imagined community'. In fact, as shown in this chapter, some contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have directly addressed the dependence of national cinema on the European producer. Moreover, Ferreira and Villazana's critique of coproduction agreements also provides insight into one of the main arguments underlying this thesis, which is that discourses surrounding different 'imagined communities' are ambiguous and conflicting. The films analysed in this chapter show that Portugal and Spain are very much engaged in discourses of belonging to the European community, whilst attempting at the same time to build a community with their former colonies. However, the interests of one community, in this case either EU or Lusophone/Ibero-American, may clash with the other, and a nation-state may opt for one community over another, a fact which is particularly evident when films address issues of immigration to Portugal and Spain in the context of the European Union.

Language and Colonial Anxiety

The most immediately striking legacy of colonialism is language, which is intrinsically related to the internalisation of a set of values established by the coloniser. The use of a common language on both sides of the Atlantic informs many aspects of the films in question such as production, reception and narrative (as well as, as previously mentioned, the fulfilment of coproduction agreements of requiring actors from Argentina and Spain and Brazil and Portugal onset). For a spectator who is familiar with the Spanish or Portuguese language, the accent of the actors in the

films is one of the main elements to distinguish Argentine from Spanish characters and Brazilians from Portuguese characters. Note that this 'accent' differs from the foreign accent of diasporic filmmakers discussed in Chapter 5, which uses the term accent as a metonym for a whole approach towards both the diegesis and the self-reflexivity of its making. Instead, in this chapter the accent belongs to native speakers and the anxiety does not only lie in the fact that they are foreigners in Portugal/Spain, but also evokes the relationship between the 'proper' and 'authentic' European language and hybrid colonised ones.

Language reveals the ultimate ambivalence in colonial discourses as it shows the differences of the 'same'. Of course this is not an issue limited to the Ibero-American context. For instance, studies of 'Commonwealth literature' (or postcolonial literatures) such as the book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 1989) articulate how once-colonised culture attempts to challenge colonial discourses in order to produce new modes of representation. In a similar way, the Brazilian Modernist Movement of the arts and literature in 1920s attempted to 'unlearn' a world view, a process which is also referred to as 'de-colonising the mind'. As Stam puts it, 'Modernismo also took a critical position toward Cabral and the *Conquista*, calling for "de-Cabralisation" and the "de-Vespuccisation" of the Americas (2003: 211). Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges has similarly asserted that 'Argentine history can unmistakably be defined as a desire to become separated from Spain' (Borges in Gene H. Bell-Villada, 1999: 7).

In the films discussed here, the mechanisms of differentiation and appropriation that take place at a linguistic level are important to explore other issues raised such as the relationship between colonised and coloniser, parents and children, national cinema and transnational practices. I argue that the key to *Martín (Hache)* lies in this need to differentiate Argentine identity from Spanish, as it permeates the film at three levels. Firstly, the film as a cultural product aims to reassert Argentine national cinema in a context of increasing dependence on Spanish funding programmes. Secondly, the film addresses new forms of Argentine identity as a result of the desterritorialisation of Argentine citizens and their consequent reterritorialisation in Spain. Third, the narrative centres on the

differences and similarities of father and son, whose names are the same (Martín). The father, who is of Basque descent, opts to live in Spain while the son claims that he does not belong to Madrid because the city of Buenos Aires is in him. Although it may be a cliché, the identification of the father with Spain, the original 'fatherland' of Argentina, and the representation of Jay, the young Argentine suffering an identity crisis and with no plans for the future, as the colonised country, offers a comment on the tensions between Argentine and Spanish identities. In this way, the father and son relationship functions as a signifier of the colonial relations between Spain and Argentina, and the 'need' to differentiate the 'same' resides also in their common name. Alicia accuses Martín of giving his son his name for patriarchal reasons and not allowing him to have his own identity. The only difference between the names is the letter 'H', which stands for *hijo* (son in Spanish). The protagonist is addressed as 'Hache', hence the title *Martín (Hache)*.⁵⁵ The dialectic of father and son presented in the film bears resemblance with Bhabha's argument that '[b]oth coloniser and colonised are in a process of miscognition where each point of identification is always a partial and double repetition of the *otherness* of the self – democrat and despot, individual and servant, native and child' (1994: 139). In other words, by providing a comment on the points of identification between Spain and Argentina and father and son, the film exposes and challenges the ideology that justifies authority and subjugation.

Foreign Land also uses the protagonist's name, Paco Izaguirre, to comment on the narrative's concern with colonialism. Igor, the character who sends the protagonist to Europe, is a relics dealer who says that relics are forgotten because they are historical evidences of the *conquista*, thereby suggesting that people do not want be confronted with the colonial past. Igor also playfully comments on Paco's Basque surname by pronouncing 'Izaguirre' in a way that sounds like 'ex-Aguirre'. If placed in a cinematic context, this reference evokes Werner Herzog's famous portrayal of Basque Spanish *conquistador* Lope de Aguirre in *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (*Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*, 1972). Herzog offered a critique of colonial conquest, revealing its sadism and paranoia. Perhaps the choice of the name 'Izaguirre' not only reveals Paco's Basque/Spanish background but also suggests that he, and thus, his present situation, are a result of colonial and neo-colonial practices, whose

⁵⁵ In the English subtitles 'H' (Hache) is translated as 'J' (Jay) the first letter of 'Junior'.

impacts remain visible as both films show. Significantly, both films engage with Basque identity, which, of course, is also in tension with Spanish identity. In *Martín (Hache)*, Jay justifies his father's actions to Alicia and Dante by saying it must be his 'Basque Blood'.

If on the one hand colonised subjects want to differentiate themselves in order to create a distinctive identity and culture, on the other, the resemblance between coloniser and colonised can also be perceived as a threat to the coloniser. Speaking a common language, of course, can be understood as one of the ultimate motors of this anxiety. Fanon's French educated colonials depicted in *Black Skin, White Masks*, are described as 'mimic men' who learn to act English but neither look English nor are accepted as such. As Bhabha puts it 'to be Anglicised is *emphatically* not to be English' (1984: 128). In one of the sequences in *Martín (Hache)*, Alicia says that Martín speaks an 'incorrect Spanish', an accusation often directed to natives of colonised countries. Ironically, Martín has become a successful filmmaker and scriptwriter in Spain. In *Martín (Hache)*, the Argentine accent not only triggers linguistic discrimination, but is also fetishised by Alicia, who constantly comments on how attractive she finds Martín's Argentine accent. Exoticising and fetishising colonised subjects and their culture are also common practices of colonialism, as Said has pointed out in *Orientalism*. Said argues that Western representations of the East are based on fantasies and underlines how the colonised subject is often related to horrors in the discourse of colonialism (savagery, cannibalism) and, at the same time, portrayed as domesticated and harmless. In other words, colonised subjects are split between contrary positions and slide between polarities of similarity and difference. In this regard, Bhabha argues that 'mimic men' have the power to menace the colonisers as well as to reveal the ambivalence of the discourse of colonialism. Due to the impossibility of securing the colonised into place and achieving fixity, stereotypes are frequently repeated in an anxious way in the discourse of colonialism. I suggest here that Alicia, facing a problematic and unstable relationship with Martín, resorts to the ambivalence and repetition that characterises colonial discourses, which she has internalised during the period she was in Spain in her comments on Martín's Argentineness, the ultimate signifier of which is Argentine linguistic markers. This point is clear when she admits that his Argentineness seduces and harms her at the same time. Significantly, Alicia is Argentine and at

times shifts her Argentine accent to a Spanish one, in particular in the sequence at the restaurant where she talks in a deprecating way about Martín's use of Spanish. It is worth mentioning that Cecilia Roth, the actress who plays Alicia, is a very famous Argentine actress who is best known in Europe for her collaborations with Pedro Almodóvar such as in the films *Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom* (*Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*, 1980), *All About My Mother* (*Todo sobre mi madre*, 1999) and *Talk to Her* (*Hable con ella*, 2002). Aristarain's preoccupation with linguistic issues, in particular linguistic variation between Argentina and Spain, also comes to the fore in *Common Places* and *A Place in the World*. In the latter, the character played by Cecilia Roth is also the one to address such issues. Therefore, the comments made by a well-known Argentine actress, who is famous for her roles in Spanish cinema on the Argentine use of language, can be read either as a subversive act or as a comment on the sense of inferiority felt by the former colonised, whose language is not the 'pure' or 'authentic' one. This point is clear in the sequence where she admits that his Argentininess seduces and harms her at the same time. This same feeling of inferiority is conveyed by Alex in *Foreign Land*, whose native accent is, in her words, considered an offence. Alex says 'As time goes by, I feel more and more foreign. I'm more aware of my accent. As if the sound of my voice offended them'. This notion of self-depreciation can be related to the colonised's internalisation of a European set of values, which in turn perpetuate their subjugation to the European coloniser. The work of Fanon and later Said exposed the mechanisms employed by colonial discourses that justify the colonising mission. By internalising colonial discourses which 'form the intersections where language and power meet' (McLeod 2000: 18), the colonised learn to regard themselves as inferiors, as 'uncivilised'. I will argue that while the characters in *Foreign Land* recognise the mechanisms used to perpetuate the subjugation of Brazilians, it complicates the possibility to resist by 'decolonising the mind'. By contrast, the protagonist in *Martín (Hache)* challenges his father and the Spanish way of seeing Argentina and does not embrace either colonialist or those of his father.

According to McLeod, colonialism is perpetuated partly by justifying the colonising mission, partly by making those in the colonising nation regard non-

Westerners as inferior. A process that can be called 'colonising the mind',⁵⁶ which 'operates by persuading people to internalise its logic and speak its language; to perpetuate the values and assumptions of the colonisers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world' (2000: 18). He argues that colonial discourses⁵⁷ 'explore the ways that *representations* and *modes of perception* are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonised peoples subservient to colonial rule' (2000: 17). The breakdown of traditional narratives in post-dictatorship Argentina and Brazil together with the problematic identity of the colonised and the countries' Third World status foreground a sense of inferiority, which, in turn, informs the means of self-representation, including cinematic ones. The relationship between inferiority and self-representation remains an important issue in contemporary cinema. Brazilian film theorists such as Fernão Ramos (2003) and André Parente (1998) have argued that the constant presence of foreigners in contemporary Brazilian cinema is marked by the negative way in which Brazilians look upon their people, their culture and themselves. In *Humility, Guilt and Narcissism Turned Inside out in Brazil's Film Revival* (2003) Ramos quotes Nelson Rodrigues, a famous Brazilian writer:

Our modesty begins with cows...And so we may ask – why do even Brazilian cows react like this? The mystery seems obvious to me. Every one of us carries a potential for umpteen hereditary humiliations. Each generation passes onto the next its frustrations and anxieties. After some time, the Brazilian has turned his narcissism inside out, and spat at his own image. And here's the truth of it – we don't find personal or historical pretexts for high self-esteem. If you're not with me, then so be it. And everything haunts us. So much so that a mere 'hello' is gratifying to us (Rodrigues in Ramos 2003: 65).

In *Foreign Land*, the countries' marginalisation in the capitalist system engenders low self-esteem and a general sense of inferiority. Therefore, instead of

⁵⁶ As a character in Wim Wenders' *Kings of the Road* (1976) states: '[t]he Yanks have *colonised* our subconscious'.

⁵⁷ McLeod argues that it is more accurate to talk of colonial *discourses* rather than 'colonial discourse' 'due to its multifarious varieties and operations which differ in time and space' (2000: 18).

challenging domination, the characters in this film reaffirm colonial discourses by subscribing to such a sense of inferiority. For instance, when looking at the ocean, Alex, a Brazilian living in Portugal, does not sympathise with the number of Brazilian natives killed during the *conquista*. Instead, she feels sorry for the Portuguese, and even nostalgic about the maritime navigation, as she says, pointing towards the Atlantic ocean: 'They thought paradise was somewhere over there. The poor Portuguese. They ended up discovering Brazil'. Alex's lines, that accompany the shot of the Tagus (which runs into the Atlantic ocean), also indicate that the fragmentation of the nation complicates anti-colonial resistance, thus evoking another type of nostalgia: for the revolutionary filmmaking that used the nation as the focal point of resistance. The link between this sequence and utopia, which was the driving force both for the maritime navigations in the Age of Discovery and the social revolution that informed the cinemas of the 1960s, takes place at a formal level. The images of the sea also acquire an allegorical meaning that links back to the Glauberian sea, explained in Chapter 3. According to Nagib (2006: 34), Glauber's sea imaginary as presented in *Black God, White Devil* draws on the representation of the sea François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (*Les Quatre Cents Coups*, 1959), which evokes plenitude and freedom. Like *The 400 Blows*, the character in *Black God, White Devils* is also running away. However, whilst Truffaut's film ends with a boy reaching the sea, in *Black God, White Devil* the character runs through the *sertão*, and the image of the sea is inserted by editing, as the *sertão* is not on the coast. In Rocha's film the montage of the sequence in the *sertão* with shots of the sea is a realisation of the prophecy announced by the soundtrack: 'the *sertão* will turn into the sea, and the sea will turn into *sertão*'.⁵⁸ Nagib (2006: 44) also observes that the title *Foreign Land*, which is in Portuguese *Terra Estrangeira*, alludes to the recurrence of the word *terra* in the title of Glauber's films including *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (*Black God, White Devil*) and *Terra em Transe* (*Entranced Earth*, 1967). In *Foreign Land*, however, the Tagus is not a part of a montage or presented as dynamic as in Rocha's film. Instead, the high angle shot of the river and the characters Paco and Alex evokes the sense of stasis and immobility that is present throughout the film.

⁵⁸ 'O sertão vai virar mar e o mar vai virar sertão'

Like Alex, who conveys a very negative image of Brazil, Martín constantly criticises Argentina. This idea that first there was dictatorship and then economic crisis is also present in *Foreign Land*, as the first democratically elected President was impeached for corruption. Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films have negotiated the transition from an oppressive state to the absence of a functioning state. Martín addresses this transition: 'Argentina is not a country it is a trap [...] The military kill 30,000 people and democracy comes and there's no money'. In *Martín (Hache)*, Martín listens passively to deprecating comments on his Argentininess and constantly criticises Argentina. The characters' feelings of inferiority complicate the possibility of re-establishing collective action, and that constituting a major break from the New Cinema movements of the 1960s and 1970s that used discourses of marginalisation in order to resist neoliberal practices. The notion of 'colonising the mind', according to which the colonised acquires a coloniser perspective, is addressed in an ironic tone in the film when Igor asks Paco 'isn't it fascinating to see Brazil from here?' The lack of perspective of a viable future in their nations vocalised by several characters in *Foreign Land* and by Martín in *Martín (Hache)* conveys the different nature of exile, as it is no longer related to the dictatorship, but the economic crisis of the two countries.

Displacement as a result of economic and identity crisis

The aforementioned importance of European funding programmes to the re-emergence of Argentine and Brazilian cinema, and Latin American cinema in general, becomes a self-referential element in these two films, in particular in *Martín (Hache)* which centres on the life of an Argentine filmmaker in Spain. The films' preoccupation with displacement of Argentine and Brazilian artists can also be understood as self-referential, as both Salles and Aristarain worked abroad. Salles graduated from the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, Thomas studied and worked abroad, and Aristarain worked for many years in Spain as a director. The need to move abroad to work as a filmmaker underlines the artistic dependence on Europe and Argentina's and Brazil's neoliberal governments' inability to support artistic activities. Moreover, films that tackle the countries' experience of globalisation often address both its historical colonialism and neo-colonial practices, usually

associated with the USA, that took place both during the dictatorship and neoliberalism. In *Martín (Hache)*, we see the Spaniard's dependence on the USA to promote a film as Spanish producers try to cast Hollywood stars, which also suggests the subordination of Spanish cinema. In *Foreign Land*, billboards in English advertising Mash and Hope, two brands of underwear, indicate the process of Americanisation that has marked the countries' experiences of neoliberalism. Igor announces: 'we live in the grip of mediocrity, my friend. Amidst the traffic jams and shopping malls, the fake modernity of ignorant yuppies, the Sidney Sheldon readers'.

In *Foreign Land*, the relationship between displacement and the economic crisis is clear when the protagonist's mother watches the real footage of the historical announcement of the *Plano Collor* by Zelia Cardoso de Mello, the finance minister at the time (1990). The announcement that the money of private assets would be frozen puts to an end his mother's dream to return to her native San Sebastián, causing an emotional shock that kills her. The radio broadcaster says 'Bewilderment, shock and incredulity. Those are the reactions to the financial legislation' while we see Paco look for money to provide a burial for his mother, creating in this way an interweaving of Paco's personal drama and the economic situation. A similar strategy that employs real footage of television news in order to enhance the drama of the characters, and even create a point of identification with national audiences, is adopted to set the socio-economic background to the narrative in *Bar El Chino*. As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, *Bar El Chino* is set when a similar measure to that announced by Cardoso de Mello was taken 11 years later in Argentina.

The film suggests that his mother's death was triggered by the announcement of the Collor Plan, as the extreme close-up on Cardoso's face takes over the screen completely, thereby creating an overwhelmingly threatening effect. The use of the full screen, making the footage a part of the film narrative, can also be interpreted as self-referential given the impact that Collor's government had in the film industry itself. The policies of Collor de Mello that triggered Paco's mother death also 'killed' Brazilian film production and, consequently, many filmmakers were compelled to work abroad. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Collor brought an end to the National Film Company (*Embrafilme*) and the national Film Council (*Concine*), a process which José Álvaro Moisés, the former National Secretary of Cultural Support (1995-98) and

National Secretary for Audio-visual Affairs (1999-02), refers to as the 'dismantling of film production' (2003: 6). He also asserts that 'the dissolution of the institutions that offered public support for the sector at the start of the 1990s' was 'an insane predatory act perpetrated by the Collor government' (2003: 5). Although *Foreign Land* was made four years after President Collor was impeached for corruption, the socio-cultural implications of his policies function as a motor of the narrative.

The 'dismantling process' (Moisés' terms) that affected film production also had an impact on the narratives and aesthetic of the films that came after. It has been said that *Central Station*, the film made by Salles two years after *Foreign Land*, implies a journey of national discovery from the 'centre' of Brazil and conveys a message of national conciliation. In *Foreign Land*, the sense of redemption and national reconciliation that informs *Central Station* is not yet present, and a more sceptical portrayal of Brazilian national identity is constructed. Perhaps the trauma engendered by the measures taken by the Collor government was still a recent memory when *Foreign Land* was made. Another connection between *Foreign Land* and *Central Station* is the representation of the quest of national identity through the search for an absent father. In *Central Station*, even though the boy never meets his father, he joins his father's family, more precisely his half-brothers. While the sense of belonging is restored in *Central Station*, in *Foreign Land* no reconciliation takes place. Perhaps, narrating the collapse of national identity in *Foreign Land* prompted Salles' intent to reconstruct it in his following film, *Central Station*.

Martín (Hache) can also be analysed against the wider background of Aristarain's oeuvre, as some of the concerns are also present in his previous film *A Place in the World* (*Un lugar en el mundo*, 1992), which also features two of the main actors in *Martín (Hache)*: Federico Luppi and Cecilia Roth. *A Place in the World* is narrated in the first-person by Ernesto, a young Argentinean, whose life was marked by both his parents' and his own displacement. He was born in Madrid because his parents were in political exile during the dictatorship in Argentina. His parents decide to return to Argentina, but opt to live in Valle del Rio Bermejo, rejecting Buenos Aires. At the end of the film, we learn that after his father's death he and his mother moved to Buenos Aires and that he had just got a scholarship to study medicine in Spain. He also says that he is not sure whether he would work in Europe or come back to

Buenos Aires 'if things improve'. *A Place in the World* also links the experience of displacement with the father figure, as the Argentine character before moving to Spain visits his father's grave and addresses his thoughts to the grave: 'I wish you could have told me what one should do to find one's place'.

Aristarain's concern with displacement is also evident in his other films *La ley de la Frontera* (1995) and *Common Places* (*Lugares comunes*, 2002). Whilst the former deals with a father who leaves for Spain, the latter deals with a son who migrates to Spain. Furthermore, the figure of Martín seems to echo previous characters also played by Federico Luppi. Gonzalo Aguilar establishes links between Luppi's roles in Fernando Ayala's *The Deal* (*El arreglo*, 1983), and Aristarain's *A Time for Revenge* (*Tiempo de revancha*, 1981), as well as *Place in the World*, *Common Places* and the character of Professor Benítez played by Patricio Contreras in *The Official Story*. According to Aguilar, the spectator tends to identify with these two characters who present the 'morally correct position, the gaze that most adequately interprets what happens' in the context of post-dictatorship Argentina. Aguilar also points out that like Contrera's character, Professor Benítez, Luppi is a high school teacher in *Lugares comunes*, putting more often than not the spectator in 'the position of adolescent' (2008: 19). In *Martín (Hache)*, this understanding of Luppi's previous roles also appear to fit into the sequences in which Martín talks to his adolescent son in a schoolmasterly tone about the dictatorship and the socio-economic problems in Argentina. In fact, opposing the experience of displacement faced by parents to that of their children is an approach used by many contemporary Argentine films, including *Martín (Hache)*, *Bar El Chino*, and *A Place in the Word*, to chart the socio-economic changes engendered by the transition from dictatorship to democracy.

Like the majority of films analysed in this thesis, the two films in question use a tragic event involving death or a near-fatal experience to justify the protagonist's displacement. In *Martín (Hache)*, Hache's overdose is interpreted by his family as a suicidal act, which, in turn, becomes his main reason to move to Spain. One of the first sequences of the film shows Hache talking to his former girlfriend. Their conversation focuses on the protagonist's desire to 'escape', which is central to the narrative of the film as well as to contemporary Argentine cinema, as I argue

throughout this thesis. In *Foreign Land*, both death and displacement are evoked by the Faustian references in the narrative, announced when Paco, a Physics university student, who aspires to become an actor, rehearses lines of Goethe's *Faust*. The most relevant passage he reads out is 'Take me to a new and different life. I wish I owned a magic coat to take me to foreign lands', indicating what the narrative holds in store. The opening sequence uses shots of São Paulo, more particularly of the Elevado Presidente Costa Silva, also known as 'Minhocão', ⁵⁹ a viaduct in the city centre that is a landmark of the city and, because it is an emblematic place, it was subsequently to become one of the settings of Fernando Mereilles's *Blindness* (2008). In *Foreign Land*, the Minhocão functions as a signifier of São Paulo in the narrative (Figure 11), as when the settings shift from Lisbon to São Paulo, a shot of the viaduct introduces the city. The striking images taken during the night and early morning of the viaduct and billboards are accompanied by Paco's voice reading a passage from *Faust*. The overlaying of citations from *Faust* are achieved formally by extra-dietetic music, shots in black and white of Minhocão, and the use of third-person narrative voice in a subjective voice over. The sequence in question frames a building near the viaduct from different angles. All the lights in the buildings by Minhocão are out, except for one, which makes us assume that the person reading in voice-over is there. We only recognise those slippages between text and image in another sequence when Paco is in his room and we can see the Minhocão through the window. We also see that the woman framed underneath the viaduct is his mother. Slippages between text and image also take place when we hear in voice-over the news regarding the country's economic situation. Images of then President Fernando Collor, whose government marked one of the darkest periods in Brazilian recent history, and the character's recitation already give the narrative a dramatic mood. The superimposition of a well known literary text hints that *Faust* will function as a guide to the filmic text. After his mother's death, in constructing São Paulo with meanings taken from *Faust*, the film suggests that Paco clearly lost his site of meaning after the severe economic measures and the death of his mother, as he walks in a disorientated manner through the streets of his home town. He then meets the Mephistophelian character Igor, who makes him the offer to take a delivery, more specifically a violin, to Portugal in exchange for a plane ticket to Europe that would

⁵⁹ Minhocão translates as 'big earthworm' because of its shape.

allow Paco to then go to his mother's place of birth, San Sebastián. The background of the Faust narrative signifies the protagonist's emigration as a pact with the devil, a message conveyed by the film, as displaced characters either die or lose their identity.

In *Foreign Land*, Paco is confronted with the unknown and even incomprehensible prior to physical displacement, as he says 'the whole country has gone mad'. The protagonist's displacement in São Paulo is also evoked shortly after his mother's death when he is having a shower and the bathroom gets flooded, making the pictures of his childhood, family and postcards from San Sebastián float on the water, suggesting the destabilisation of what is familiar and known to him. He then tries to piece the pictures together like a puzzle, trying to make meaning from memories. Within this understanding, it can be argued that the title *Foreign Land* not only refers to literal foreign lands (Portugal and Spain, in this case), but also to Brazil, which becomes a strange environment after the economic and personal changes faced by the character. The homeland's transition from familiar to unfamiliar is underscored by many of the films analysed in this thesis, which narrate the death of a member of the family and the subsequent need to leave 'home'.



11. Shots of Minhocão signify São Paulo, while images of the Tagus evoke Lisbon and its maritime colonial past

In both films, parents also criticise the young protagonists, who are reclusive in their rooms. In *Foreign Land*, Paco's mother criticises him for staying in his room reading a book, while Hache stays in his room, playing music. Another element that evokes the need to 'escape' in the films is music. Both the protagonist of *Martín*

(Hache) and Victor in *Foreign Land* are young musicians who come from a so-called underdeveloped country, where artistic activities are not supported, as in Europe. The lack of encouragement faced by a sophisticated musician like Victor both in Brazil and Portugal, which he says is not 'real' Europe, and his subsequent involvement in crime, stress the film's critique of the disregard of 'genuine' artists.

The idea of Europe as more sophisticated in terms of art is also present in *Martín (Hache)*, as Martín openly criticises the way Hache plays music. The close-up on Martín's Elmo Hope CD also suggests that his tastes differ from his son, who is portrayed for most of the film wearing a black t-shirt of Brazilian heavy metal band *Sepultura*. It is worth noting that musical genres that are often considered national identity markers such as fado and tango are usually heard or mentioned in relation to the sense of nostalgia that informs the films. In *Foreign Land*, there is a sequence showing a fado singer, performing a song about nostalgia, more specifically about *saudade*, which is a very particular word in Portuguese for which there is no literal translation but which means roughly the feeling of longing. *Saudade* is engrained in Portuguese culture, as the character suggests 'fado' translates as 'fade', and evokes a sense of longing which informs Portuguese national narratives which usually link back to the fall of the Empire. These national narratives of longing include *Sebastianismo*, a mythology that assumes that Dom Sebastian, who died during a campaign of conquest in North-Africa, would return and restore the Empire. Likewise, in *Martín (Hache)*, the experience of displacement is embedded in tango, a theme that was mentioned in Chapter 4. The association between this important marker of Argentine national identity and the Argentine experience of homelessness is addressed by Alicia: 'He's half-deaf and doesn't listen. He's blocked by the tango nostalgia of Buenos Aires natives in exile' to which he responds 'no nostalgia, no tangos, no exiles. Just hard of hearing'.

Significantly, in both films it is the mother who wants the protagonist to go to Spain. In *Martín (Hache)*, Hache's mother asks his father to take Hache to Spain, whilst in *Foreign Land*, Paco's mother wants to take Paco to her birthplace. While Paco's mother wants to take Paco to her homeland, Hache's mother suggests that Martín takes Hache to Spain with him. The idea that parents do not see a viable future in their homelands for their children is stressed by the negative comments that Martín makes about Argentina and the fact that he is not willing to return. As

mentioned, the lack of perspective experienced by Argentineans and Brazilians in the early 1990s was marked by a number of Argentine and Brazilian nationals reversing the steps of their European parents or grandparents who immigrated to Argentina. Although the characters in *Martín (Hache)* are not marginalised in Spain like the Brazilian characters in *Foreign Land* are in Portugal, he is an immigrant who is constantly reminded of his Argentineness. Moreover, his Basque background adds to the complexity of his position in Spain.

In *Martín (Hache)*, Madrid is portrayed as a wealthy place in contrast to economically troubled Buenos Aires. This contrast is clear when images of Hache walking past the graffiti on walls, buses and old cars is juxtaposed by the sequence showing his father driving in an avenue in Madrid (Figure 12). The images of Madrid have more light and colour whilst Buenos Aires is portrayed as gloomy. His father's apartment in Madrid is spacious whilst in Buenos Aires, Hache has to sleep on the sofa because there are more than five people living at the same apartment, which conveys the idea of Buenos Aires as a claustrophobic place, a notion present in some of the Argentine films analysed in this thesis. The first ten minutes of the film already establish a binary between Spain, pictured in wide shots and blue skies, and a gritty Buenos Aires, pictured in a close frame. The image of Buenos Aires is darker, as the trees overshadow the character. However, this contrast between Madrid and Buenos Aires becomes a powerful one when Hache rejects Madrid in favour of Buenos Aires, by justifying that Buenos Aires is 'in him'. He compares the building roofs of Madrid and Buenos Aires, saying that the ones in Madrid are beautiful and there is 'no comparison'. However, he says that it is the 'ugly' roofs of Buenos Aires that he misses. Hache ultimately rejects the path his father chose, which means living outside Argentina. Therefore, although Hache, who represents the younger generation, acknowledges Argentina's 'ugliness', he prefers it over other wealthier countries, thereby reasserting national identity in the context of economic crisis.



12. Hache wanders around Buenos Aires while his father drives his car through Madrid. The filmic representation of the two cities acquires an important meaning, as for Hache, it is not the beauty of the city that matters, but the sense of belonging that he could only feel in Buenos Aires.

In *Foreign Land*, The representation of both São Paulo and Portugal are dark and gritty. The juxtaposition between scenes that take place in Brazil and in Portugal creates a simultaneity of time and space between Europe and Brazil. Such simultaneity is emphasised by the subtitles used to indicate the place and date, which is the same in São Paulo and in Lisbon: March, 1990. The juxtaposition of images of the viaduct at night and the city centre of Lisbon shows a neoliberal and urbanised Brazil (Figure 13) in contrast to a backward Lisbon. However, both São Paulo and Lisbon are signified as the loci of the protagonist's struggle, in terms of narrative and formally. Images in black and white, probably an influence of film noir, shots of the empty cities in silence adds drama to the Faustian plot.



13. Backward Imperial Power (Lisbon) and Urbanised Colony (São Paulo) in *Foreign Land*.

Significantly, Paco's life in São Paulo and Hache's life in Buenos Aires are marked by the absence of the father. If, in *Martín (Hache)*, the re-union between father and son helps to reassert Argentine national identity, as Martín returns to Argentina, in *Foreign Land*, there is no reconciliation between the characters and their nation. In *Foreign Land*, the notion of redemption comes in a more symbolic way. His mother, a seamstress, is taking his measures and he opens his arms. She first says that he looks like her father and kisses him. Seconds after that scene, a friend comes into their house and jokes saying that he looks like the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. The religious symbolism that evokes self-sacrifice already suggests what the narrative had in store for protagonist, who has a tragic ending. Redemption, return and national reconciliation come into play at both narrative and aesthetic levels in *Martín (Hache)*. As argued throughout this thesis, the theme of re-union between son and father functions as a metaphor for the quest of national identity in recent Argentine films, including *Lost Embrace*, analysed in Chapter 4. Like *Martín (Hache)*, *Lost Embrace* centres on the life of a young male *porteño*, whose father left Argentina. In both films, the protagonists interpret their fathers' displacement as a selfish gesture, a fact that is proved wrong at the end of the narrative. For instance, in *Martín (Hache)*, Hache's father gives up directing a major film production because the producers did not want his actor friend Dante involved because of his drug addiction. At the end of *Lost Embrace*, Ariel learns that it was his mother who cheated on his father and that his father lost his arm fighting in Israel. Another element important to the narrative of both *Martín (Hache)* and *Lost Embrace* is the use of media such as cassette and video to reveal the truth that will eventually

promote reunion or redemption. I relate the use of the cassette to shorten the physical and emotional distance between father and son to Naficy's concept of 'epistolarity'. According to Naficy, 'the epistolaries are also driven by epistophilia, which often involves a burning desire to know and to tell about the causes, experiences and consequences of disrupted personal and national histories' (2001: 25). In *Martín (Hache)*, Hache films himself and send the tape to his father in order to say he is going back to Buenos Aires, whilst in *Lost Embrace* the father reveals his reason to leave Argentina. The use of another medium to communicate stresses the emotional block that marks the relationship between displaced father and son as well as the characters' similar conflict-avoidant personalities.

Re-territorialisation and the colonial past

If in *Martín (Hache)*, the protagonist's experience in Spain allows him to differentiate himself from his father and make a decision to return to Argentina, in *Foreign Land*, the protagonist's experience in Portugal enhances his identity crisis. Although he has a relationship with a compatriot there, one Brazilian has a negative effect on the life of the other. Paco just gets involved in all the problems that motor the narrative because the other Brazilian, Victor, whom he had to deliver the violin to, died. The characters do not see returning to Brazil as a possibility either. In Alex's case, the possibility of return has been removed, as she has sold her passport, the symbol of mobility. Zygmunt Bauman states that travelling has become a commodity in contemporary society and draws attention to the fact that not everybody has access to global mobility: '[s]ome of us enjoy the new freedom of movement *sans papiers*. Some others are not allowed to stay put for the same reason' (1998: 87). According to Bauman the differentiation of visa and passport have acquired symbolic meanings as the latter has to do with migration while the former is usually associated with tourism: 'The present-day combination of the annulment of entry visas and the reinforcement of immigration controls has profound symbolic significance. It could be taken as the metaphor for the new, emergent, stratification' (1998: 87). Such stratification and the immobility imposed on some is ultimately represented by the striking image of the characters hugging in front of an old ship stuck at a shore (Figure 14). This idea is clear in the film, as shortly after this sequence by the boat,

Paco gets shot, and Alex drives through the border, literally smashing the border symbol.



14. The stranded ship evokes the stasis of the Brazilian characters abroad as well as the end of grand-narratives that informed both Brazilian revolutionary projects and Portuguese Maritime Navigation during the Age of Discovery.

Alex is offered only 300 dollars for her passport because 'Brazilian passports are worth nothing', as one of the characters states. She says 'but it's almost new' and he replies 'but it is Brazilian'. The relevance of such a motif to the narrative is underscored by the original poster for the film, which was stylised to resemble the stamp of the Brazilian passport. This motif is furthered in the sequence in which Paco applies for a passport: his photo is taken, then a hand is framed sticking it on the passport, and finally there is a close up on his completed Brazilian passport. The sequence in question is, significantly, followed by the sequence in which Alex sells her passport. Selling her Brazilian passport is symbolic of both identity loss and Brazil's marginal position in a capitalist world, and exposes a self-degrading attitude towards national identity. In Chapter 4, nationality, as a 'material inscription on bodies', in Sarlos' terms (2001), was explored when a German character tears his passport up in the context of World War II. With the adoption of neo-liberalism in Brazil and the creation of the EU, it is the Brazilian passport which is portrayed as 'worthless', in the words of a European character. It is important to note that Alex not only lost her identity, she sold it. Significantly, in Brazilian popular culture, the motif of Brazilians selling Brazil to foreigners is recurrent and is particularly related to the notion of betrayal. This idea of selling the country can also be linked with the IMF and the programmes of privatisation that has marked post-dictatorship Argentina and Brazil.

In contrast to *Martín (Hache)*, in which the tension between Argentine and Spanish identities are mirrored in a conflictual relationship between father and son, *Foreign Land* engages more explicitly with postcolonial issues, as references to the colonial mission ranges from the protagonist's name, shots of the river Tagus and dialogues that directly addresses colonisation. Moreover, *Foreign Land* seems to be more interested in portraying the failure of the Lusophone imagined community than the ambiguous identity negotiations between former coloniser and colonised as Brazilian characters tend to be the victims of hostile circumstances in Portugal. For instance, the place has a negative impact on them, turning them into criminals. In *Foreign Land*, the notion of the former colonised, the 'barbaric', as a menace, is a motor to the narrative. The protagonist and Hugo, two frustrated Brazilian artists, become criminals in Portugal. In fact, the experience of criminality of one Brazilian affects the other, as Paco only gets into trouble because Hugo was killed. Alex, Hugo's girlfriend, tries to make a living, working as a waitress and putting up with discriminatory comments about Brazilians made by the Portuguese restaurant owner. Alex also gets involved in smuggling because of Hugo, who, in turn, could not make a living out of music. The film conveys the idea that the Brazilian middle-class characters did not want to be criminals. In fact, it was their experience in Portugal that turned them into criminals. As Ferreira points out, 'instead of encountering inter-identities, the Brazilians lose their sense of self' (2006: 736). This idea is vocalised by the Portuguese character, who advises Paco that Lisbon is the ideal place to lose someone or to get lost. In *Foreign Land*, there is no sense of direction or time, as Paco tells Alex that 'it has been two weeks since my mother died. It seems more like ten years'. Instead of a plot that evolves through time and space, the narrative stops building up when the characters cross the border, and arrive at the stranded ship by the sea. The sequence does not provide a horizon and symbolises the characters' directionless existence, a notion that is underscored by the final sequence of the film in which a person plays the violin that resulted in Paco's tragic ending, framed underneath a sign saying 'exit'.

The interaction between Brazilians, Portuguese and natives from other colonies of Portugal such as Angola and Cape Verde is full of animosity, challenging completely the existence of a sense of community between Portuguese-speaking

nations as promoted by the CPLP (Community of Portuguese speaking nations). In analysing how the characters from former colonies interact, it is important to take into consideration that they have been interconnected historically, first through colonialism followed by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and, more recently, as in the context of the film, through globalisation. Within this understanding, I argue that the way in which *Foreign Land* engages with the return of the postcolonial subject to the former Metropole at the beginning of the 1990s foregrounds three further types of identity other than Lusophone.

Some of the concepts in postcolonial theory can shed light on the communities portrayed in the film. Firstly, the integration in the European Union has strengthened discourses that separate Europe from its 'others'. For instance, Igor gives smart clothes to Paco, fearing that he would not get through immigration control, which means that he would not be accepted into the European Community which Portugal was now a part of. Secondly, there is the postcolonial diasporic community in Portugal, which is represented as heterogeneous and divided in the film, as white Brazilians such as the main characters of *Foreign Land* can easily be perceived by other members of the Lusophone community as being as hostile as the Portuguese. This point becomes clear when one of the African characters warns the Angolan character who had previously tried to help Paco, but ended up being accused by him of theft: 'I have told you before. You play with whites, you get in trouble'. Such differentiation between postcolonial subjects relates to the physical underpinnings of the encounter of colonised and colonisers that also inform the hierarchical relationship between postcolonial subjects, as post-colonial theorists such as Fanon (1968) has observed. The existence of such a postcolonial diasporic community is given a derogatory connotation by Victor, who refers to it as the 'cabaret of the colonies'. The relationship between the former colonies and the tensions between white Brazilians and Africans is an important historical issue, as Luso-Brazilians acted as co-colonisers in their effort to continue the slave trade. Fernando Arenas points out that Luso-Brazilians and the Portuguese fought the Dutch occupation of the Brazilian north-east and Angola 'to recover the Angola-Brazil lifeline that the Dutch had wrested away from them' (2005: 6). Therefore, together with discourses relating to Portugal as an EU member versus non-EU colonies, the

fractions within the postcolonial diasporic community challenge the discourses of a common historical and cultural background promoted by the CPLP.

In fact, even linguistic bonds are challenged in the film, as Brazilians and Africans have some misunderstandings at a linguistic level, in particular as a result of different vocabulary. In other words, these three notions of collective identities portrayed in *Foreign Land* stress the heterogeneity of CPLP while challenging its very existence. The most cynical comments on the inexistence of such brotherhood comes from Victor, who is highly critical towards Portugal, to which he refers as 'the cabaret of colonies'. He also refers to another immigrant character as 'Mr Cape Verde'. A negative connotation of speaking the 'same language' is given when a criminal says to Victor: 'are we speaking the same language or what?' In this sequence, language, supposed to be a crucial legacy and shared element of the Lusophone community becomes a facilitator of criminal activity. It is worth noting that the negative connotation that the film gives to the Portuguese language subverts certain discourses that defend the existence of a 'brotherhood' in the context of the postcolonial Lusophone world. In this regard, Bela Feldman-Bianco (2010) argues that re-interpretations of Fernando Pessoa's text 'A minha pátria é a lingua portuguesa' (translated as 'My Fatherland is my Language') has been used to reaffirm the existence of a supra-national Lusophone community, as it compensates for the borders created between Portugal and the rest of the Lusophone world as a result of the immigration policies of the EU. Feldman- Bianco argues that:

Influenced by this expansionist vision on Portugal, the 'Movement Without Borders' invoked a shared Portuguese language to reinforce the cultural sameness between former colonisers and colonised. It attempted to dissolve the contradictions and incompatibilities inherent in the process of changing the former metropolis into a European postcolonial nation. This strategy is extremely significant insofar as the movement employed the same metaphor used by governmental officials with regards to the creation of a Portuguese postcolonial nation based on population, rather than territory. By resorting to the Portuguese language as a metaphor of the 'bonds of blood' (and this common descent) the 'Movement Without Borders' began to demand rights to the common historical roots without ever referring to any colonial debts or exploitation (2010: 623).

Significantly, not only is the former colonised subject reduced to stereotype, but in Argentine and Brazilian cinema, the representation of the former coloniser is more often than not caricatured. In films like *Martín (Hache)* and *Bar El Chino* the Spanish producers are opportunists, who are usually involved with neo-colonial practices in filmmaking. Through the figure of the Spanish producer or manager, the film comments on the dependence of the Argentine cultural industry on European funding, a problematic that is present in Burman's work as well as Aristarain's. In *Martín (Hache)*, Martín speaks to a Spanish producer in order to develop his screenplay, whilst in Burman's *Waiting for the Messiah* the protagonist applies for a position at a television channel and is interviewed by a Spanish manager. The same happens in *Bar El Chino*, when Jorge is in a meeting with a representative of a Spanish company. In these three films the Spanish characters are in control and the Argentine characters are the ones who come into their offices. Significantly, the Spanish figure is also present in other well-known Argentine fiction films such as *Rain (Lluvia)*, Paula Hernández, 2008) and *Nine Queens*. In regard to the recurrent presence of Spaniards, Rocha notices that Spanish characters are presented as lovers in the films *Today and Tomorrow (Hoy y mañana)*, Alejandro Chomsky, 2003) and *Heartlift (Lifting de corazón)*, Eliseo Subiela, 2005). Rocha points out that the Spaniards in these films are 'well-to-do men who fall for young Argentine women. Metonymically, these women represent Buenos Aires, the city that enchants and seduces these middle-aged men' (2008: 128). I argue, however, that the presence of Spaniards in the work of Aristarain is a more complex one than the representations suggested by Rocha, as they are self-reflexive, addressing the film's own making as a coproduction with Spain. Rocha suggests that the presence of the Spanish character in *Common Places* is only included to fulfil coproduction requirements rather than represent the Spanish immigrant (2008: 134).

Although the representation of the Portuguese in *Foreign Land* does not reflect traditional preconceptions (such as for example that of Portuguese 'stupidity') which are disseminated through jokes and popular culture in Brazil, the film does problematise discourses on brotherhood which are based on the linguistic similarities promoted by the Lusophone community. Some of the Portuguese and European characters in the film such as the bar owner, the drug dealers and the two men to

whom Alex sold her passport acquire a very negative connotation, whilst the Brazilian characters tend to be portrayed as victims of the economic system in their countries and prejudice in Portugal. Such a bleak portrayal of Portugal also emphasises the countries' historical backwardness in comparison to northern European countries. Portugal's 'semi-peripheral position', in the words of Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, also affected the countries' colonialism, as he argues that:

Portuguese colonialism was the result both of a deficit of colonisation — Portugal's incapacity to colonise efficiently — and an excess of colonisation — the fact that the Portuguese colonies were submitted to a double colonisation: Portugal's colonisation and, indirectly, the colonisation of the core countries (particularly England) on which Portugal was dependent (often in a near colonial way) (2002: 9-10).

The link between maritime imaginary and Portuguese Empire is established at the beginning of the narrative, as the first shot of Lisbon depicts the Tagus. On his first night in Portugal, Paco is woken by the sound of a boat. The stranded boat by the beach also suggests Portugal's transition from maritime-colonial empire to a country subordinated by other imperial powers such as Spain, Holland and, most of all, England. In this regard, Boaventura de Sousa Santos draws on the character of Caliban from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in order to argue that the Portuguese coloniser consists of both the coloniser identity and the colonised one: 'the Portuguese Prospero is not just a Calibanised Prospero; he is a very Caliban from the viewpoint of European super-Prosperos. The identity of the Portuguese coloniser is thus doubly double' (2002: 17). Unlike *Martín (Hache)*, where there is a reconciliation with the father in Spain, in *Foreign Land* the father figure remains absent, which perhaps reflects the lack of colonial authority of Portugal. An important element regarding Portugal's subaltern position as a coloniser is Portugal's historical dependence on Brazil, bringing yet another dimension to the dynamics of the Lusophone community. In regard to Portugal's dependence on Brazil, it is worth noting that in 1807, the Portuguese empire, under the threat of Napoleon, came to be ruled from Brazil, more precisely Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, the colonial empire was ruled from its own colony. The film deals with Portugal's role as subaltern coloniser both in terms of narrative and aesthetics. In the narrative, Portuguese characters, in

particular the ones involved in criminal activities, are nothing but employees of other European criminals. For instance, Igor, the man who assigns Paco the task to hand over the violin to Hugo, is threatened by French criminals. Therefore, whilst Igor takes advantage of desperate Brazilian immigrants, he is subordinated to nationals from a more developed country than Portugal. The death of a talented Jazz musician in Portugal, who used drugs to 'escape' from his reality there, also underscores that Brazilians acknowledge Portugal's position as a subaltern in Europe. Victor tells the Portuguese character that he would send him a postcard from 'Europe', and the Portuguese character says: 'You'll have to get into Europe first'. Moreover, Paco did not want to go Portugal at first. He wanted to go to his mother's birthplace in Spain. In the film, the Angolan character also ironises Portugal's role as coloniser. When Paco says that it was from Lisbon that they left to 'discover the whole world', the Angolan character jokes: 'Portugal? It takes them three hours to cross that bridge'. The fact that Brazilian characters have a tragic ending after emigrating to Portugal, suggests that the former coloniser, and ultimately the colonial past, complicates the re-building of national identity in the context of crisis.

In *Martín (Hache)*, Argentine national identity, Spanish national identity and Ibero-American identity are three major notions of collective identity that inform the film. The Ibero-American community framework is present in the collaboration between Spanish and Argentine artists, which is present in both the narrative and production of *Martín (Hache)*. Of course, this community also informs Martín's identity on many levels: he is of Basque descent and from Argentina, a country whose history has been marked by the waves of immigration from Spain to Argentina. Unlike *Foreign Land*, *Martín (Hache)* does not engage directly with the postcolonial diasporic community in Spain.⁶⁰ Martín (Hache) also differs from other contemporary Argentine films dealing with emigration, as it does not address problems relating to migration rules to enter the Schengen Area. In fact, Martín occupies a privileged position in Spain and has a qualified job. This is distinct from the Brazilian characters in *Foreign Land*, who despite being middle-class and educated (for instance Paco quotes Goethe's *Faust* and Victor plays sophisticated music) do not occupy a

⁶⁰ Issues of race, gender and class differences within the postcolonial diasporic community in Spain are often portrayed in contemporary Spanish films, including for instance *Flowers from Another World* (*Flores de otro mundo*, Icíar Bollaín, 1999) and, more recently, *Princesas* (Fernando León de Aranoa, 2005).

privileged position in Portugal. Instead, Brazilian characters become part of Lisbon's underworld life. In *Martín (Hache)*, there is only a brief comment made by Alicia that may lead the spectator to think that some of the postcolonial subjects are also involved in underground activity in Spain. This is when she mentions that she got the drugs from a Bolivian person. I suggest that *Martín (Hache)* offers a more ambiguous approach to the experience between colonised and coloniser than *Foreign Land*, as it focuses more on personal relationships and Martín is not the stereotypical postcolonial immigrant, who is a marginalised character in Spain. Moreover, while in *Foreign Land*, Brazilians lose their identities, a process that happens literally when Alex sells her Brazilian passport, in *Martín (Hache)* the protagonist reaffirms who he is. In either cases, however, the former coloniser functions as a reference to both the reassertion and abandonment faced by young Argentine and Brazilian people during the economic crisis in the 1990s.

Chapter 7. Cinema and Mercosur: negotiating regional identity

One of the outcomes of scholarly attention to the processes of globalisation and the formation of regional blocs such as the European Union, NAFTA, and Mercosur/ Mercosul is the relatively widespread belief that national borders are increasingly fluid. A number of recent trends have challenged the self-contained autonomy of the nation-state and focused on large population flows and the expanding recognition of the universal rights of individuals over rights deriving from the citizenship of a particular nation-state. Yet national borders remain sites and symbols of conflicts, tension and marked differences. In this regard, in *Argentina and the Southern Cone: Neoliberalism and National Imaginations*, Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler argue that:

Assuming that macroeconomic 'integration processes' have direct, immediate effects on the cultures involved is to lose sight of the preexisting historical and political dimension, as well as of the differentiated social interests and strong feelings of belonging of the people living along any given border (2005: 22).

Since its creation in 1991, when post-dictatorship Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay signed the Treaty of Asunción, Mercosur has mobilised discourses around regional integration and the need to strengthen regional identity. In 1996, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru gained associate member status, which allowed these countries to join free trade agreements but remain outside the bloc's customs union. Mercosur's efforts to promote economic growth as well as political cooperation have engendered transformations of the border areas in the region. However, there is a counter-narrative (see M. Featherstone and Scott Lash, 2005; Newman, 2006) to notions of an increasing borderless world put forward by theories of regionalisation,⁶¹ and more generally, globalisation. In regard to the existence of borders in the Mercosur area, Grimson and Kessler argue that 'frontiers have not been erased in the Southern Cone; their function and meaning have changed, but in

⁶¹ 'Regionalism' is a response to the processes of regionalisation and globalisation while 'regionalisation' is a process that results from spontaneous forces and intensifies interaction led by non-state actors (Fawcett, 2004).

many ways they are stronger than ever' (2005: 22). Given that the creation of Mercosur and the re-emergence of Latin American cinemas took place contemporaneously, it is not surprising that the representation of national borders in contemporary films have negotiated the changes of the imagined space of the region as well as the redefinition of political borders. Cinema has therefore contributed to the symbolic dimension of the integration process. In using actual borders of the countries as settings, the films became visible manifestations of how borders within the region are constructed, imagined and experienced. Accordingly, it is my intention in this chapter to investigate the cultural significance of borders through an exploration of the issues raised by a selected corpus of contemporary Latin American films that tackle the experience of border crossing within the Southern Cone region. I thereby seek to develop existing critical perspectives on cinematic representation of border crossing and contribute to recent theoretical debate on regional integration, identity and culture.

Initially, this chapter proffers an account of the regional/national tensions noted in much Mercosur literature and found in the cultural products of the region. Critically, this account attempts an assessment of quite how contemporary Latin American cinema portrays borders within the region and whether these representations of border crossing reaffirm or challenge Mercosur's rhetoric of regional unity. My particular interest is in investigating how films represent sociocultural conflicts and negotiations within this region, and conversely, how films as cultural products engage with the cultural diversity of the region. Any division of the theme of borders into categories can only be provisional, given the fluid and interconnected relationship between the different types of human experience that the border symbolises. Nevertheless, I intend to distinguish between three thematic foci: journey, work, and getaway — the three dominant categories of border crossing in the films grouped here. Although some of the films analysed adopt a road movie format for the exploration of identity, their narratives constantly subvert this format from within, an important point to acknowledge and to further discuss the representation of borders is explored.

Journey and Border crossing: *The Motorcycle Diaries* and *Rolling Family*

The best known contemporary Latin American film to represent border crossing in the Southern Cone is *The Motorcycle Diaries* (*Diarios de Motocicleta*, Walter Salles, 2004). The film exploits and subverts the road movie genre, which is, according to Wendy Everett, 'a fluid and open-ended genre which uses the narrative trajectory of road as an extended metaphor of quest and discovery through which to approach fundamental concepts of identity' (2004: 19). Other Latin American road movies include successes of *Central Station* (also directed by Salles) and *And Your Mom Too* (2002), for which Gael García Bernal, the star of *The Motorcycle Diaries*, had already received much acclaim. The film is based on Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's memoir of his journey in 1952 across South America with his friend Alberto Granado, and is a product of regional cooperation, written by a Puerto Rican, directed by a Brazilian filmmaker and received its funding from Argentina, Chile, Peru, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The film also features Mexican star Gael García Bernal and Argentine actor Rodrigo de la Serna.

Like most road movies, *The Motorcycle Diaries* is a film that uses geographical and cultural displacement as means of self-discovery. Significantly, maps and measurements of territory are recurrent motifs in *The Motorcycle Diaries*. When Ernesto explains his trip in voice-over, the image is a map of Latin America. Every time the characters cross a border and change countries there is a title indicating where they are and how many kilometres they have travelled. With regards to maps as a motif, Peter Middleton and Tim Woods argue that 'although maps purport to accurately represent places, they actually produce ideological spaces, and in so doing ignore human experiences of space' (2000: 282). In the film, the characters' intercultural relationships challenge the delineation of geopolitical borders between countries. Their failure to follow the journey planned according to the map indicates that the borders explored by the film cannot be defined; they are unmappable.

The film differs from other road movies, as Che Guevara is the most important political figure in Latin America of the 20th century, to whom Jean-Paul Sartre

famously referred as 'the most complete human being of our age'. However, neither the narrative nor the aesthetics impart the politics that are usually associated with Che Guevara and found in films such as *The Hour of the Furnaces* and *Che... Ernesto* (Miguel Pereira, 1998) and more recently, Steven Soderbergh's *Che: Parts 1 and 2* (2008). In fact, the narrative is less concerned with the well known figure of the *guerrillero* than the 23 year old Fuser, which stands for Furibundo Guevara Serna, a nickname given by his rugby team mates. Ernesto or 'Fuser' leaves medical school and his girlfriend to embark on a journey across the sub-continent. In one of the first sequences of the film, Ernesto, in first person narration, says that the objective of the journey is to 'explore the Latin American continent which we know only in books',⁶² anticipating Ernesto's self-discovery as one that will be interconnected with discovering Latin America.

The motorcycle, which is in the very title of the film, functions as a key signifier in the narrative. At the beginning of the film, Alberto says: 'Just as Don Quixote had Rocinante, San Martín had his mule, we have "La Poderosa"',⁶³ which translates as 'the powerful'. Although the motorcycle, 'the powerful', is given a name that suggests empowerment, it does not correspond to the symbol of U.S. culture eternalised in the road movie *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969). Instead, the motorcycle, an old 500cc Norton, which according to Ernesto is 'broken and dripping', is unreliable and breaks down repeatedly. Given the problems with the motorcycle, the characters stop calling it 'the powerful' and start referring to it in many deprecating ways throughout their journey, including 'carcacha' (old heap), saying 'somos los de la moto destartalada' (We are the ones with the beat-up motorcycle). The motorcycle also functions as a self-referential element, which is usually treated in a humorous tone, in particular, when Ernesto flirts with a mechanic's wife and the characters discuss the effects of the motorcycle on their journey. For instance, just after their arrival in Chile, the characters are dragging the broken motorcycle and Ernesto complains 'Che, you said we'd ride into Chile like "conquistadores". Not walk in like a pair of assholes'. He

⁶² 'El plan: recorrer 8000 kilómetros en 4 meses. El método: la improvisación. Objetivo: explorar el continente latinoamericano que sólo conocemos por los libros'.

⁶³ 'Así como Don Quijote tenía a Rocinante, San Martín tenía su mula, nosotros tenemos 'La Poderosa'.

then suggests that they continue their journey on foot and Alberto protests: 'you want to cross the continent on foot, genius?' Ernesto responds that leaving the motorcycle to walk on foot would enable them to meet more people.

The self-referential and rather comic treatment of the motorcycle shows that it has a different agenda in this film from that in traditional Hollywood road movies that present the means of transport as an object of speed. The problems with the motorcycle force the two young men to interact with locals in most of the places they go, offering commentary on the different cultures and people in Latin America. Such encounters are essential to Ernesto's personal development, as he learns about social injustice in the region, which is usually associated with the iconic figure of Che, with whom the spectator is already likely to be familiar. Once the motorcycle breaks down, leaving the characters to continue their journey on foot, the wide shots are replaced by a handheld camera that closely follows their movements, subverting the iconography of the road movie which, according to Susan Hayward (2006: 335), is traditionally marked by the open spaces of wilderness.

At the end of the film, a sequence of black-and-white shots of the people they encountered along the journey gives the narrative a documentary tone, which also differs from traditional films of the road movie genre. This strategy stresses the authenticity of the film, which is based on a true story and provides a representation of the Latin American people, who become increasingly relevant to Ernesto's journey and identity. In regard to the sequence in question, Claire Williams argues that 'the faces display the range of ethnicities native to South America, but because they are shown sequentially there is no need for a comment on their nationality. Their identity is clear. They, like Ernesto and Alberto, are Latin American' (2007: 24). Watching Ernesto's acknowledgement of the problems faced by the people in the region and his reactions to them, the spectator is shown how the protagonist's journey becomes increasingly motivated by the notion of collective identity. Ernesto's refusal to recognise national and political borders within the sub-continent becomes clear when he decides to swim across the Amazon River to celebrate his 24th birthday. In regard to this sequence, Geoffrey Macnab contends that 'not since Byron crossed the Dardanelles has a swim been invested with such meaning' (2004: 72). Ernesto's swim across the Amazon River, where the frontiers of Colombia, Peru, and Brazil

meet, is symbolic of the fluidity and multiplicity of Latin American identity as well as the dreams of pan-Latin American unity. The importance of border crossing is underlined by the way in which the sequence portrays Ernesto overcoming both personal and natural obstacles to cross frontiers, including his asthma and the wild tropical fish he may be attacked by on the way. Significantly, the Oscar winning soundtrack 'Al otro lado del río', which translates as 'the other side of the river', alludes to this memorable sequence. Significantly, border crossing in that context means literally to go to the 'other side of the river', as some of the films mentioned here illustrate.

Moreover, the film's portrayal of borders as non-existent is also evident when the characters are in a boat in Lago Frías, Argentina. The establishing shot of vast landscape and the openness that greets the character's arrival in Chile is introduced by Ernesto reading, in voice-over, a letter he sent to his mother: 'Dear Mom, what is lost when we cross a frontier? Every moment seems split in two: melancholy for what is left behind, and, on the other hand, all the enthusiasm of entering new lands'. A wide angle shot of the mountains, the movement of the clouds, and the fluidity of the river, which clearly indicates the constant flux that shapes their journey, also impart Ernesto's personal opinions and feelings on borders. In the sequence in question, the only close up shot is when Ernesto turns to Alberto and says 'look Mial, Chile' and Alberto shouts out 'long live Chile', his words echoing as a result of the natural landscape which is then shown in long-shot, the clouds and mountains of the Chilean territory dwarfing the boat. In their dialogue, the characters are framed in constant movement as the boat floats on the lake between Argentina and Chile, evoking a sense of fluidity linked to the utopian possibilities of border crossing in the context of Latin American integration.

Another strategy employed by the film in order to emphasise the notion of Latin American identity is the recurrent references to historical characters, including for instance, San Martín, who, together with Simón Bolívar, is regarded as one of the Liberators of Spanish South America, and Túpac Amaru, the last Inca leader, who died fighting the Spanish conquistadores. These points of reference impart the notion

of a common historical background marked by colonisation and resistance.⁶⁴ These historical figures also imply the idea that only a united Latin America can resist ideological and physical domination. A sequence that addresses colonialism directly is set in Peru, where they meet an old Quechua woman who did not have a formal education because she was not fluent in Spanish. Moreover, the film compares Inca culture with Spanish, favouring the indigenous over the colonial. In his trip to Machu Picchu, Ernesto ponders:

The Incas had an extensive knowledge of astronomy, medicine, mathematics, amongst other things. But the Spanish invaders had the gunpowder. What would America be like today if things had turned out differently? [...] How is it that I feel nostalgia for a world I never knew? How can a civilisation capable of building *this* be wiped out to build *this*?

Whilst the former ‘this’ coincides with a shot of Machu Picchu, the latter ‘this’ is a bird’s-eye shot of Lima, creating a stark contrast between Inca architecture and that of the main city. This comparison, whilst implying the superiority of Inca architecture over Spanish, challenges a Eurocentric notion of progress and knowledge. Such a postcolonial perspective adopted by Che Guevara is also part of Mercosur rhetoric, which has treated the region’s common colonial history as a unifying issue. However, scholars, including for instance, Grimson and Kessler have criticised the notion of common identity based on a similar historical background, which has been endorsed by Mercosur, arguing that ‘the reworking from a regional perspective of the great conflicts in the history of the member countries — was rejected in favor of common narratives whose unreality approaches that of absurdity’ (2005: 49). Grimson and Kessler support their argument by confronting the way in which the Jesuit missions have been employed in integrationist discourses:

⁶⁴ In *Los límites de lo transnacional: Brasil y el Mercosur. Una aproximación antropológica a los procesos de integración*, Gabriel Omar Alvarez points out that although Bolívar has not been part of Brazilian history or Brazilian national discourses, Mercosur rhetoric uses his figure in two ways. The first evokes the ‘sueños de Simón Bolívar’ (dreams of Simón Bolívar) in order to strengthen discourses of regional integration, while the second underlines Bolívar’s figure as a reference to regional resistance against domination, in this case, US territorial interference in Latin America (1995: 41).

[l]inking the Jesuit missions with the idea of the ancestral brotherhood of Latin American peoples is nothing short of absurd. It should be noted, however, that cultural policy, and not 'academic error', is responsible for anecdotes such as those previously mentioned. The stated aim is finding an integrationist angle from which to fabricate a romantic tale of past 'brotherhood' among Mercosur member peoples (2005: 49).

In fact, there is a brief mention of Jesuit missions in *The Motorcycle Diaries*, when the characters are in Cusco, a place which Ernesto refers to as 'the heart of the Americas', thereby stressing the notion of Latin America's shared history of catechisation and colonisation. Therefore, the film's attempt to bring to the fore common narratives of the Americas conforms to the integrationist perspectives criticised above by Grimson and Kessler. The filmic narrative returns to the past, including for instance colonisation and the regional integration envisaged by Che Guevara, in order to engage with common narratives pertaining to Latin America history. The very focus on Che Guevara evokes the strong historical links between communism, borders and regional cooperation in the Southern Cone. Both military dictatorship and left-wing political exiles have marked the history of the region. For instance, in the 1970s, the repressive forces of the Southern Cone embarked upon 'Operation Condor' in order to capture political exiles living in the neighbouring countries. This historical moment is mentioned in Aristarain's *A Place in the World*, as the character played by Cecilia Roth narrates how she escaped to Brazil during the dictatorship. Although such supra-national cooperation was repressive in nature, it was one of the first steps towards regional integration.

In this context, Grimson and Kessler argue that 'the specter of communism in the context of the Cold War and the spread of national security doctrines constitute one chapter in the globalisation and regionalisation of Southern Cone political conflicts' (2005: 33). The notion of a common Latin American culture and identity is also often linked to the common experience of military dictatorship during the Cold War. This is the case with the New Cinema movements in the 1960s and the 1970s such as Cinema Novo in Brazil and Grupo *Cine Liberación in Argentina*. In fact, the Spanish title of *The Hour of Furnaces*, *La hora de los hornos*, recalls after Che Guevara's adaptation of an expression used by poets and historians, 'la hora de los

hornos' (the hour of the cooking fires), in order to proclaim revolution: 'now is "la hora de los hornos"; let them see nothing but the light of the flames'.(Macbean: 1970). The expression had been previously employed by the Spanish conquistadores who spotted from their ships the *hornos*, the cooking fires used by Argentine natives, and thus named the territory that would be later Argentina's *Tierra del Fuego* (land of fire). Guevara's centrality to Third Cinema is clear both in Solanas and Getinos' foundation text 'Towards a Third Cinema' and in their film as a part of Grupo Cine Liberación, 'The Hour of the Furnaces', which shows Guevara's dead body in order to highlight the scarce resources of Latin American people and the role of the revolutionary.

It is also significant that *Motorcycle Diaries*, a contemporary film that centres on the life of Guevara, is more often than not framed discursively as a Latin American film. For instance, Luisela Alvaray argues in 'National, Regional, and Global: New Waves of Latin American Cinema' that *The Motorcycle Diaries*' success 'in all of its forms, is indicative of the waves that today are revitalizing the cinemas of Latin America' (2009: 49). Likewise, Claire Williams refers to the film as 'a truly pan-American film' (2007: 11). The endorsement of an all-encompassing notion of Latin American identity does not mean, however, that the film neglects the cultural diversity of the region. In fact, the film portrays Latin American identity as multiple and in flux, and repeatedly alludes to Argentine national identity. National identity often comes into play through the use of distinctive linguistic markers, despite the countries involved in their journey having Spanish as their official language. For instance, Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal does a perfect Argentine accent in the film, and on their arrival in Chile, Alberto shouts out 'Viva Chile Po' ('long live Chile'), incorporating the well known Chilean interjection 'po'. Likewise, Alberto and Ernesto use the Argentine interjection 'che', which later would be used to refer to Ernesto, 'el Che'. Ironically, Che, the leader of supranational revolution, is thus named after a distinctive Argentine linguistic marker that is used throughout the film. This point suggests that, perhaps, national identity remains strong in the most utopian regional integration projects, thus stressing the importance of nation as a framework in a transnational context.

At the beginning of the film, Ernesto and Alberto stand out as foreigners by constantly performing their 'Argentiness'. Alberto wears *gaucho* trousers; they drink

yerba mate, the national drink in Argentina, and even play Argentina's ambassadors when the motorcycle breaks down in Chile, telling the mechanic that if he helped them, he would improve bilateral relations between Chile and Argentina. Interestingly, in the same scene in which the characters make a point of announcing their national identity, they argue that they are important doctors in the field of 'Latin American medicine'. This national and simultaneously regional sense of community is also underscored by further references to San Martín. While these allusions evoke the notion that South America has a shared historical background, they impart the message that like San Martín, Che Guevara is also an Argentine who became a regional hero. In regard to the importance of San Martín to Argentine narratives of nationhood, Grimson and Kessler contend that 'One of the primary patriotic tales of the founding of Argentina, taught to every Argentine child in primary school, is that José San Martín crossed the Andes to liberate Argentina, Chile, and Peru from Spain' (2005: 30).

The figure of San Martín is also evoked by another film portraying borders in the region, namely, *Rolling Family*. A coproduction between Argentina, Brazil, France, Spain, Germany and United Kingdom, *Rolling Family* is a family road movie made two years before the American hit *Little Miss Sunshine* (Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, 2006), which led to many comparisons between the two. The film follows the journey of a family from Buenos Aires suburbs to a village located in the Province of Misiones, where a family wedding will take place. While their journey reflects Trapero's preoccupation with the breakdown of the family unit and the de-centring of Buenos Aires (two themes that, as we previously saw in Chapter 3, characterise the director's work). It also explores issues of personal and national identity. Nevertheless, the most pertinent aspects of this film to this chapter are the journey's destination and film's final location, the village in the Province of Misiones, located on the Brazilian and Paraguayan border, and the mobility that characterises notions of home and family. The choice of Argentina's geographical limit as the final stage of their journey works as an effective metaphor for a family unit that is pushed to its limits. During their journey the family members experience feuds, love affairs, hot weather and unreliable transport in a camper van atop an old Chevy pickup. As a border area, the Province of Misiones has been a locus of geopolitical problems and power disputes in the past. Therefore, in portraying the frontier as the final

destination of both the family's journey and the closure of the filmic narrative stresses the disruptive nature of borders. In fact, the final destination and setting of the film has been a place of identity and cultural struggles, because Brazilian influence in this province has always been strong, as Grimson and Kessler argue:

Argentina felt threatened by the advance of Brazilian hubs of development and highways, as well as the plans to build a bridge across the river Uruguay and the so-called cultural penetration of the Brazilian mass media. Other signs of frontier consolidation on the part of Brazil such as increased contraband and local organisations for fomenting commerce and tourism also unnerved Argentine geopoliticians (2005: 28).

Such a problematic territory is represented in the film not only as a place of closure, but also as a stage for nationalistic celebrations. On their arrival in the Province of Misiones, the family is surprised by a group of *gauchos* who are celebrating San Martín's day (Figure 15). Festive elements such as the Argentine flags, the *gauchos*, and the very celebration of the day of San Martín, whose centrality to Argentine narratives of nationhood has already been mentioned evoke Argentine nationalism. Moreover, in showing some family members visiting a *gaucho* museum, the film imparts the paradoxical role of *gauchos*, also known as 'South American cowboys', in narratives of nationhood. *Gauchos* are both national and regional icons, as their culture and identity is not only limited to regions in Argentina, but also found in regions in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. These regional figures strongly associated with the nation evoke regional identity while reasserting national identity, thereby illustrating how national and regional frameworks can collide. In *Rolling Family*, *gauchos* display national pride, an illustration of how national identity can prevail over regional, a criticism often applied to regional projects, as national interests remain a challenge for integration. Although *Rolling Family* is a coproduction involving Brazil, the country is only mentioned once in the film when one of the characters looks at the Brazilian territory over the hill and says that he would like to go to Brazil some day. Interestingly, the sequence set on the Brazilian border is the moment of the film that conveys the strongest sense of nationalism. In fact, the Brazilian territory is represented merely as non-Argentine 'other', and the filmic representation of the border helps define notions of Argentine territory as well

as identity. This suggests that *Rolling Family* contradicts integrationist perspectives on border crossings as places of exchange and circulation by reinforcing fixed notions of national identity and well-defined territories.



15. Argentine *gauchos* celebrating a national holiday, San Martín's day, on the border with Brazil

Working at border crossing points: *The Pope's Toilet*

Another film that focuses on border crossing in the region is *The Pope's Toilet* (*El baño del Papa*), directed by Enrique Fernandes and Cesar Charlone and coproduced by Ibermedia programme, O2 and ANCINE (Brazil), Chaya Films and Fonds Sud Cinema (France), and Laroux and FONA (Uruguay). Whilst in *The Motorcycle Diaries* frontier inhabitants and their problems form a background to the protagonist's journey, *The Pope's Toilet* exposes the impacts of borders on the life of the so-called *passador* (petty smuggler). Although the story takes place prior to the creation of Mercosur, the film is a product of the increase in film coproduction in the region and poses important questions about the integration efforts that more often than not tend to neglect the sociocultural and historical differences that did not cease with the creation of the regional bloc.

Set on the border between Uruguay and Brazil, the film differentiates itself from other Latin American films that portray the border-crossing experience by

focusing on the daily life of a border dweller. The film charts the actual trip taken by Pope John Paul II in 1988 through South America and fabricates a sequence of events that might have taken place at that time. The Pope's visit makes the poor people from Melo, a Uruguayan town near the Brazilian border, think of ways they could profit from Brazilian pilgrims. Unlike his neighbors who invest all their savings in chorizos and burgers, the protagonist, a petty smuggler named Beto, decides to provide the incoming masses with a toilet. The story focuses on Beto's efforts to build the toilet, in particular, his constant experience of border crossing to earn a living. In the *Pope's Toilet*, the border – cultural, geographic or political – between Uruguay and Brazil is the key signifier and acts as a negative force. This negative connotation of the border is established in the opening sequence of the film when the protagonist and his friend hide behind a rock in order to observe the border control. The fact that the border intimidates the characters to the extent that they have to hide suggests that the characters are perceived by the authorities as enemies. In the opening sequence, which depicts the characters' journey from Melo to the border, the wide long shots of the characters cycling along the landscape marked by the movement of the animals and the fluidity of the river create a stark contrast to the close-ups used when the characters stop near the border. This clash between the two sequences ultimately serves only to emphasise their stasis nearer the border. Naficy offers an interesting insight into border spaces:

Exilic border spaces and border crossings are inscribed not only in fixed transitional sites [...]. Claustrophobia pervades the mise-en-scène, shot composition, and often the narratives of films that feature buses and trains as vehicles and symbols of displacement. And since these vehicles travel through countryside and wide-open spaces and between countries, there is always a dialectical relationship in the accented films between the inside closed spaces of the vehicles and the outside open spaces of nature and nation (2001: 257).

Indeed, in the film, the sense of claustrophobia is underscored by the 'stop' sign in front of the border area which is shown in a particularly striking use of point of view, the image cutting directly from the characters' eyes to their exact view of the 'stop' sign, enables the spectator to understand what borders mean to the characters.

The impact it has on them is suggested by the way they are shown nervously observing it from a distance. Nevertheless, this important signifier in the film is portrayed as a precarious place. The actual location consists of an old house by which the border guard reads a newspaper and listens to an old radio. Borders work as the villain of the narrative, being personified in the figure of the mobile patrolman, Meleyo, who continually threatens and humiliates the characters. In portraying the border patrol's use of coercive power, the film suggests that instead of protecting citizens, the control exercised over frontier populations generates violence and fear. Before crossing the border, Beto and his friends try to swap goods such as paint and firecrackers in order to facilitate border crossing. It becomes clear that the characters are not mere citizens trying to cross the border, but petty smugglers who sell cross-border goods. In this sequence, the camera alternates between Beto, in front of a Uruguayan border sign, and his friend, in front of the Brazilian border sign, as they nervously exchange customs goods. It is clear that the alternation between these signs establishes that the characters are poised over the dividing lines between the two countries (Figure 16). This well delineated territorial demarcation of Uruguay and Brazil shown in the opening sequence acquires an important symbolic dimension as the narrative revolves around fixed notions of nation.



16. Interplay of shots that situate the characters in-between Brazil and Uruguay

Drawing on Seymour Chatman's (1990) distinction between 'story-space' and 'discourse-space', Marina Moguillansky argues in 'Lugares comunes. Acerca de la figuración de espacios identitarios en el cine del Mercosur' that although Brazilian territory is not really shown on the screen, it has a central role in the narrative. Monguillansky's argument becomes clear if we make a comparison with the scene in the Brazilian town, Aceguá, in which the confined camera and the ellipsis of both interior and exterior shots provide a striking contrast with the long shots of the

journey between Melo and Aceguá. Brazilian territory is portrayed as claustrophobic: the characters are not as free there as they are in their own country. Such representation of the Brazilian territory and the lack of interaction between Brazilians and Uruguayans suggests that there is little communication and cultural exchange in the frontier zone. This lack of interaction allows the media to create their own version of Brazil and Brazilians, giving people from Melo a wrong impression of what is going to happen.

Naficy argues that borders 'fire up the human imagination, for they represent and allegorise wanderlust, fight and freedom' (2001: 243). The characters' hope for life improvement lies beyond borders as they invest all their money, expecting 20,000 Brazilians to cross the border to see the Pope. The cultural difference between Brazilians and Uruguayans also comes into play in a rather ironic way. If most Uruguayans are less interested in faith than profiting from the Pope's visit, Brazilians are expected to be devout Catholics who would cross borders and spend money to see him. This stereotype of Brazilian people is continually reinforced by the radio and the television, which take advantage of their ignorance and desperation, by broadcasting misleading facts about what is taking place in Brazil. For instance, the radio broadcaster announces: 'there is a 10km line-up of Brazilian buses in Aceguá, waiting to enter our country'. The sequences that show people from Melo listening to the radio or watching the television illustrate the media's role in imagining the border, and more precisely, what is beyond it.

Irit Rogoff argues that borders are 'the final line of resistance between a mythical "us" and an equally mythical "them"' (2000: 112). In this respect, *The Pope's Toilet* posits national identity as a mythical and imaginary construction through the absence of Brazilian characters in the narrative. There are only two sequences featuring Brazilian characters. The first sequence is when the characters are in Aceguá and they buy goods from a Brazilian shop. The second is when Beto, desperate to arrive in Melo before the expected crowd arrives, cycles with the toilet on the back of his bicycle. A bus with a large Brazilian flag hanging from one of its windows drives past Beto and a Brazilian passenger says in Portuguese: 'hang in there, my friend'. This sequence implies that despite the use of 'friend', there is no interaction between the characters and that Beto just thinks of Brazilians as potential

costumers. The film represents the cross-border relationship as a merely commercial one. In the film, borders are reduced to 'service zones' with no social programmes to benefit border dwellers or cultural exchange. Although the film is set in 1988 and the so-called 'regional integration' projects began in the early 1990s, its representation of border crossing mirrors some of the changes promoted by integration policies, which have removed customs barriers only for large companies while increasing customs and immigration control for everyday citizens and petty or 'ant' contraband (Grimson and Kessler, 2005: 41). The sequence shot in Brazil, showing the characters handling Brazilian money, also offers a comment on another issue relevant to regional integration: the different currencies within the region. Unlike the European Union, Mercosur has not so far developed a single currency.

The media often refer to Brazilians as 'hermanos', Spanish for 'brothers'. The term is also used in the banner put up by people from Melo as a welcoming gesture to the Brazilian pilgrims 'Saludos hermanos brasileños' ('Welcome Brazilian Brothers'). This notion of brotherhood is vital to Mercosur rhetoric, which, as Grimson and Kessler point out, has tried to find 'an integrationist angle from which to fabricate a romantic tale of past "brotherhood" among Mercosur member people' (2005: 49). The film challenges this notion of brotherhood, as it centres on national collective identities: 'us', Uruguayans from Melo, who expect 'them', Brazilians from across the border. In fact, the narrative develops the way it does and results in frustration precisely because of the lack of cross-border interaction and because of fixed notions of collective identity. While the filmic narrative challenges the existence of such 'brotherhood', the production of the film seems to endorse it. Not only is the film a coproduction involving both Uruguay and Brazil, but the director, Uruguayan filmmaker César Charlone, is a naturalised Brazilian and best known for his work as a cinematographer on the highly acclaimed Brazilian film *City of God* (*Cidade de Deus*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002). The film creates a reality effect by the constant use of documentary elements including the use of interviews and an intertitle at the beginning of the film announcing that it was a true story. The narrative employs interviews with people who talk about their expectations of the Pope's arrival, a strategy previously employed in *Central Station*.

As in *Motorcycle Diaries*, transport also functions as a key signifier in *The Pope's Toilet*, where it represents both stasis and movement. In *The Pope's Toilet* the lack of motorcycles serves to underscore the immobility of the characters, who cannot afford to pay for transport to work and thus are continuously overtaken by motorcycle drivers. In the end, the need for a motorcycle is even greater when Beto's injured knee prevents him from working, leaving the protagonist little option but to work for the violent mobile patrolman who will provide him with a motorcycle. While the motorcycle is empowering at first, it brings more complications and crossing borders becomes increasingly difficult for him. The different representation of border crossing in these films mirrors their divergent perspectives on both geographical and cultural borders.

In *The Motorcycle Diaries* cultural differences are observed as a part of a unity, Latin America, while in *The Pope's Toilet*, the narrative is built because there is an 'us' (Uruguayans) and a 'them' (Brazilians). Integrationist perspectives on Mercosur stress the shared common historical and sociocultural background, which has resulted in the establishment of a top-down common identity: 'Mercosur has tried to activate "integration from above," while at the same time generating down below new frontiers between populations and citizens' (Grimson and Kessler, 2005: 39). This point is clear when comparing the protagonists of the two films: one being about a political figure and the other about an ordinary border dweller. In *Motorcycle Diaries*, the regional hero swims across the Amazon River despite his own asthma and the river's dangerous piranhas, evoking the fluidity of borders in Latin America, while the narrative of *The Pope's Toilet* shows the otherwise neglected negative effects of regional borders in the life of citizens. In other words, in comparing these two films, one can conclude that regional integration works better as a part of a discourse about the ideals of political leadership than as part of the daily life of citizens.

Of course another relevant element of border-crossing between Brazil and Uruguay is language, as some understandings of Latin America tend to divorce Brazil from its neighboring countries precisely because of its linguistic difference. Arguably, there are three main reasons to counter the notion that the language barrier alienates Brazil from regional integration. Firstly, Brazil's emergent economy and political power put it in what is often considered a leadership position regarding

regional integration in the Southern Cone. For instance, in the 4th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2010, it was the Brazilian Ministry of Culture spoke on behalf of the members of Mercosur. Secondly, Portuguese and Spanish are not the only languages spoken in Latin America, as can be observed in some of the films analysed in this chapter, and linguistic diversity, in particular brought about by the existence of indigenous languages, is an issue that is taken into consideration by Mercosur Language Policies. In addition, border dwellers usually manage to communicate in 'Portuñol', a mixture between Portuguese and Spanish, which is used in *The Pope's Toilet*. The characters do not have a formal education in Portuguese but manage to communicate with Brazilians and vice versa. In fact, there are local cultures in Brazil that share an identity with other neighbouring countries, most notably the *gauchos* in the Brazilian Southern State of Rio Grande do Sul, where there is a strong identification with Uruguayan and Argentine frontier culture. Thirdly, the cultural tensions between Spanish speaking countries in the Southern Cone are also a factor, observed in many contemporary films, including for instance Adrián Caetano's *Bolivia* (2001), a film that charts the story of an illegal Bolivian immigrant who works in a bar in Buenos Aires and experiences racially-motivated violence. Therefore, cultural tensions within the region cannot be simply reduced to a Portuguese/Spanish dichotomy.⁶⁵ In fact, this chapter includes an analysis of Lucía Puenzo's *The Fish Child* (*El niño pez*, 2009), a film that engages with the ethnic and cultural tension between Argentina and Paraguay, two predominantly Spanish-speaking countries (Paraguay also has Guaraní as one of its official languages).

Recent films portraying border-crossing involving Argentina must be understood within the context of the country's experience of globalisation and the internal fragmentation of national discourses, including discourses on Argentina's

⁶⁵ The filmic analyses of *The Motorcycle Diaries* and *The Pope's Toilet* in this chapter originated in a paper given at the University of Queensland, Australia in February, 2011. One of the questions raised by the audience regarded the language barrier between Brazil, the only Portuguese-speaking country in the Southern Cone, and its Spanish-speaking neighbours. The delegate observed that films that engage with border crossing between Spanish-speaking countries and Brazil, as is the case with *The Pope's Toilet*, tended to challenge the integrationist perspective whilst films that portray borders within Hispanic Latin America like *Motorcycle Diaries* tend to endorse it.

racial purity and European heritage. At the same time that the neoliberal economic reforms culminated in the financial crisis of 2001-2, engendered changes in the political borders within the Southern Cone, prompting the formation of Mercosur. In other words, Argentine citizens were undergoing a traumatic experience of crisis that challenged some of the traditional ways the nation imagined itself when discourses on regional integration promoting the circulation of goods and people came into existence. Furthermore, the post-dictatorship and neoliberal context in which Argentine cinema re-emerged was marked by the increasing incorporation of multiculturalism in public politics and the constitution during the 1980s and 1990s in Latin America, which generated numerous debates on ethnicity and the countries' sociodemographic profiles. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Argentines generally differentiate themselves from their neighbouring countries, including Brazil, whose national narratives embrace African and Indigenous identity and culture.⁶⁶ Indeed, Argentina was often considered by Argentine society and other neighbouring countries as a piece of 'Europe' in Latin America, a perception that is also related to the fact that the country is predominantly white and formed by European descendent. For instance, Argentine football fans demonstrated a sense of racial superiority over the Brazilian football team in the 1920s, calling them 'little Macaque monkeys'. As Grimson and Kessler note '[p]eople proudly affirmed, in accordance with the racist ideology of the era, that Argentina was a country with no African-born or indigenous population' (2005: 3). This subtended racial 'superiority' has been challenged recently by the images of Argentina as a country in crisis and by films portraying the arrival of a new wave of immigrants from bordering countries, in particular, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. These social changes have also been reflected in the ways in which recent Argentine films have portrayed Argentine characters as resentful, needing to find a 'scapegoat for the ongoing economic and social crisis' (Grimson and Kessler, 2005: 118). Page argues that recent films portraying the life of border migrants in Buenos Aires expose the internal fragmentation of Argentine nationhood engendered by the financial crisis:

⁶⁶ According to Alcida Rita Ramos, the indigenous population represents 0.2% of the total population of Brazil (1998: 3-4), whilst according to Hector Vázquez the estimated percentage of indigenous people in Argentina is 1.2% (2000:133-34). Therefore, the indigenous population in Argentina is proportionally larger than that of Brazil, rendering the perception that Argentina has no indigenous people in comparison to neighbouring countries problematic.

The unflinching testimonies to the misery suffered by immigrants in current-day Argentina presented in films such as *Bolivia* and *Vladimir en Buenos Aires* give the lie to several fictions of Argentine nationhood. Among these is the fiction of the 'país de la plata fácil' (country of easy money) held out to immigrants who, in the context of economic recession, are now more often condemned to live precarious lives and rarely to realise those dreams in a nation ill-placed to provide even for the basic needs of its own citizens (2009: 125).

In *Bolivia* the xenophobic attitude towards the Bolivian migrant is triggered by both the financial deprivation and stagnation experienced by the Argentines and their anxious desire to try and separate their so-considered European homogenous culture from the indigenous cultures of the neighbouring countries. *The Fish Child* also presents the same idea by depicting the Paraguayan maid working with a family whose members display a similar sense of racial superiority. Both films, however, portray the anxieties of a society that has experienced the decline of fixed and traditional narratives of nationhood since the financial crisis. In *Bolivia*, the customers of a bar show their prejudice overtly and make dismissive remarks about neighbouring countries such as: 'those Uruguayans are assholes. My old lady is Uruguayan. I go there a lot. But they are assholes. They'll gyp me. They're capable of anything'. The line in question is not only one of the many xenophobic comments made by the characters in the film, but also a direct accusation to Argentine society, as the director of *Bolivia*, Adrián Caetano, is Uruguayan-born. He can thus be seen as offering a comment on Argentine society from the perspective of an immigrant. Racial prejudice is also vocalised in *Bad Times*, as the Paraguayan immigrant worker is a victim of derogatory comments made by an Argentine character. Miller and Yúdice argue that economic integration has not necessarily hindered discrimination towards the migrant workers, by drawing parallels between the minoritisation of Mexican workers in the US or extra-communitarian in the new Europe and Bolivians in Mercosur, as they argue:

This is the case for Bolivian migrants who seek work in Argentina and whose presence, coincident with the waning of class-based politics, has led Argentines to speak publicly of ethnic and racial difference for the first time

since the consolidation of an immigrant national identity in the early twentieth century. (2002: 178)

However, such vocalisation of ethnic and racial differences also seems to be experienced by other minorities in Argentina, including, for instance, Paraguayan immigrants. Like *Bolivia*, *The Fish Child* charts the moral decline of contemporary Argentine society through the exploration of issues such as crime, racism, homophobia and misogyny within a focus on cross-border migration between Argentina and Paraguay. Nonetheless, unlike *Bolivia*, which centres on the experiences of an immigrant in Buenos Aires, *The Fish Child* portrays migratory movement both from and to Argentina and Paraguay. *Bolivia* is extremely pertinent to the theme of this chapter, as it exposes racial stereotyping in South America and how Argentine cinema has dealt with the xenophobia directed against border migrants. For the purpose of this analysis, however, I have chosen to concentrate primarily on the representation of borders in *The Fish Child* not only because it portrays characters engaging with physical border-crossing, but also because each side of the border is given equal prominence, charting the interrelations between marginalised and central subjectivities within the region. Although *The Fish Child* addresses pertinent issues relating to gender and class, the present analysis is concerned primarily with the representation of metaphorical and geographical borders between Argentina and Paraguay.

Borders as a Getaway: *The Fish Child*

The opening sequence of *The Fish Child* shows the protagonist, Lala, crossing the bridge between Argentina and Paraguay. This sequence is composed of two different timeframes, the present, which is Lala's journey, and the past, which is reconstructed by flashback scenes. On her way to Paraguay, Lala sees on television in a bar that her Paraguayan maid and lover, Guayi, is suspected of committing a crime. The image on the television and the constant interplay between past and present demonstrate Lala's involvement with Guayi, the 20-year-old Paraguayan maid working at her home, while suggesting that Lala's journey has something to do with the news item and may actually be a getaway. The alternation between Lala's journey and the flashback scene that shows her and Guayi looking at the map while

planning their escape to Paraguay indicates that the route followed by Lala in the present is the same one that she had previously planned with Guayi. The narrative establishes the border as one of its key signifiers, a notion underscored by the direct cut from the map in frame to the territory it represents, more precisely, the geographical border between Argentina and Paraguay, the famous ‘Pasarela Internacional de la Amistad’ footbridge that links Clorinda, Argentina to Nanawa, Paraguay (Figure 17).



17. Direct cut from the map to the territory (border) it represents.

Lala, the Argentine teenager, crosses the *Pasarela Internacional de la Amistad* (International Footbridge of Friendship), observing the other pedestrians, who are usually engaged in cross-border activities such as commerce. In this sequence it is clear that the borders in the film also signify class divisions. In fact the border-crossing experience is included in this film in order to show how the protagonist’s life has been shaped by her relationship with the ‘other’. Leading a middle-class Argentine girl away from Buenos Aires and towards the ‘other’, the bridge, as a representation of escape, is of course accorded a particular significance in Argentina’s experience of globalisation. In Chapters 3 and 4, we already saw that the desire to leave Buenos Aires and the resultant breakdown of family unity is a theme explored in Trapero’s *Born and Bred* and Burman’s *Lost Embrace*.

Although the geographical border, a footpath that suggests the movement of coming and going, is depicted only at the beginning of the film when Lala crosses it, the narrative implies that the characters cross borders more than once. This movement is also portrayed by the people surrounding Lala as they are walking in opposite directions. In fact the footpath itself is a representation of the changing

function and meaning of borders in the context of regionalisation. The relationship between the characters also affects the filmic representation of border crossing and the opening sequence clearly signifies the frontier between Argentina and Paraguay as a locus of exchange and conflict. This frontier acquires a metaphorical importance in the narrative as the existence of racial stereotypes is central to the plot and the development of the story. In portraying the actual border as a footpath and engaging with issues of hybridisation and ethnicity, the film shows that imagined borders can be more rigid and active than the real ones. The filmic representation of borders, both cultural and geographical, reveals that an integrationist perspective on cultural exchange can be ambiguous. If on the one hand the footpath, or the bridge, allows Paraguayans such as Guayi to work in Argentina and the Argentine girl to go to Paraguay, on the other, the lack of interaction between people in the border areas is notable. In the narrative, the bridge is symbolic of the relationship between the Argentine and Paraguayan characters, establishing an extended metaphor of both the cultural tension and cooperation between these two countries. Lala is walking towards the sign that indicates 'Customs Argentina- Paraguay Footbridge of Friendship', a name which recalls the discourses of 'friendship' and 'brotherhood' between the member countries promoted by Mercosur. Like the previously mentioned *The Pope's Toilet*, it also engages with discourses on regional 'brotherhood' so as to challenge them, by showing how fixed notions of national identity remain strong at the border zone. In a similar way, the representation of borders in *The Fish Child* challenges the idea explicit in the very name of the bridge as the protagonist has no interaction with people around her, let alone friendship. The film shows the intense informal commerce in the frontier zone and creates a stark contrast between the other people crossing the border and the protagonist, who stares at people passing by with curiosity, hinting that she does not belong to that environment.

Lala's border crossing is above all a catalyst for scenes that enable Puenzo to portray the Paraguayan character's background and reconstruct Guayi's past. The representation of the shores of lake Ypoá and the use of a pre-modern element of Paraguayan culture, which the legend of 'the fish child' signifies, create a stark contrast with Lala's life in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. This contrast between Argentina as modern and Paraguay as archaic is underscored in the montage that

intercuts Lala's arrival in Paraguay, showing informal commerce and precarious work, and the flashback scene of the party in her house in Buenos Aires. The film uses the experience of the Paraguayan girl, constructed as 'other' from an Argentine perspective, to address issues pertinent to contemporary Argentine society. For instance, the narrative problematises the stereotyping of immigrants as the only perpetrators of crime, as the white Argentine girl murders her father and also steals money. However, it also reminds us of the existence of such stereotypes in Argentina, as the Paraguayan character is the only one who is punished and sent to prison. By exposing the ethnic and cultural tensions in the intimate relationship between a rich Argentine girl and a Paraguayan maid of indigenous descent, *The Fish Child* brings together individual and socially-grounded anxieties that underscore the subordination of the Paraguayan subject. The Paraguayan maid is initially the object of the gaze of the Argentineans she meets, including Lala and her father. Like the Paraguayan character in the film *Bolivia*, Guayi is fetishised, wears a maid uniform and experiences sexual harassment throughout the narrative.

Despite the film's basically essentialist vision of Paraguayan identity, the narrative suggests unbridgeable discontinuities between ethnicities and nations in the Southern Cone by focusing on the intimate relationship between the two characters and using a bridge, a viaduct that symbolises exchange as the frontier between the countries. When Lala crosses the border, the narrative subsequently strives to represent the points of view of both Argentine and Paraguayan characters. This becomes clear when the last scene of the film portrays the characters looking eye to eye, suggesting an identification between Lala and the subject of discrimination. Furthermore, Lala expresses her desire to invert roles with Guayi, when she tries to serve the guest, annoying her mother who does not let her. Lala's attempt to swap roles with Guayi suggests that border crossing is also very much related to class, an idea introduced formally at the beginning of the film, when Lala crosses the border for the first time and is seen as alien to that environment.

Another contemporary Argentine film that uses borders as a getaway is *Lion's Den* (*Leonera*, Pablo Trapero, 2007), a coproduction between Argentina and Brazil. Like *The Fish Child*, *Lion's Den* interweaves border crossing, crime and the breakdown of the family unit. In the final sequence the protagonist crosses the river

between Argentina and Paraguay, and the camera moves back, widening the frame until the protagonist's image becomes indistinguishable within the Paraguayan territory. The film ends on the landscape around the border, creating a stark contrast with the enclosed framings of her in jail which characterise the rest of the film (Figure 18). Because borders have a liberating connotation, the wide-angle shot of her leaving with the child removes the familiar contours of the protagonist's existence, thereby suggesting that she broke free from confinement in Argentina. As in *Lion's Den*, in *The Fish Child*, Buenos Aires is related to a sense of confinement which is made literal when the female characters are shown in prison (Figure 19). It is worth mentioning that border crossing within the Southern Cone as a means to escape from criminal responsibilities features also in *Pizza, Beer and Smokes*, when a character, El Cordobés, who plans to escape to Uruguay, is shot before reaching the boat.



18. *Lion's Den*: Border-crossing as liberation from confinement in Argentina.



19. Prison, a recurrent location in contemporary Argentine films. Female characters framed behind bars in *The Fish Child* (left) and *Lion's Den* (right).

Lala's wish to leave Buenos Aires and escape to Paraguay is an example of reverse migration, as there are more Paraguayan immigrants in Argentina than Argentinean immigrants in Paraguay. This sort of de-centring of Argentina and more

precisely Buenos Aires is also related to some of the postcolonial issues raised in the film, in particular those associated with Guayi's indigenous background. Like *The Motorcycle Diaries*, this film shows that Latin America is a community of linguistic diversity, more often than not between the indigenous populations and those of European descent. The most notable sequence is when Lala's father asks Guayi to sing and she replies that she can only sing in Paraguayan Guaraní. The fact that she sings and nobody understands the words can be seen as an act of resistance. This is also present in other relevant Latin American films that deal with indigenous populations, most notably, Claudia Llosa's *Madeinusa* (2005) and *The Milk of Sorrow* (*La teta asustada*, 2009)

Considering that languages can also create barriers, the act of translation is another key element in border crossing, as the process of identity formation requires the tradition, memory and knowledge encoded in language. Therefore, the attitude towards the legend of the fish child can also be understood within an indigenous tradition that is deep-rooted and attached to the homeland, and that inspires the Argentine girl cross the border to see it with her own eyes. Her need to understand the legend, reconstruct Guayi's past and live in Paraguay reinforces the narrative recognition of hybridisation that has already been established through Lala's association with the postcolonial subject. However, the decision to structure the film's narrative around Lala means that the film falls rather conventionally into the western film tradition of approaching the ethnic 'other', in this case the Paraguayan maid. The choice of protagonist, perhaps, reflects the director's own relationship to the topic she is addressing, as Puenzo is an Argentine woman from a privileged background. In *The Fish Child* as well as in other films previously analysed in this chapter, national identity is constructed more frequently with respect to images of the other. At the same time as it engages with a relationship and pictures the border as bridge, the film comments on the inability of Argentine society to come to terms with changes in its political landscape and exposes a mental barrier marked by prejudice that proves difficult to eliminate even in an intimate relationship.

Conclusion

I have attempted to indicate here a number of ways in which, by endorsing or challenging integrationist perspectives, these five films act as articulations of regional culture and identity. The examination of national and regional identity against the background of Mercosur reveals in particular how film is put to use in the construction of collective identities. The contemporary representation of border crossing testifies to its centrality in the Southern Cone and provides images and stories of regional integration. Different as these films may be, what they share is an interest in showing two or more national territories in the Southern Cone, not necessarily as part of a unity, but in order to understand their own national culture and identity through representation of the neighboring country. The films offer a comment on cultural exchange within the region as well as a reassessment of allegiances and categories of belonging, by either questioning or re-affirming what it means to be Latin American in the light of the processes of globalisation and regionalisation.

Although all the films were made after the formation of Mercosur, some of the narratives are set prior to its creation, offering an insight into the relationship between historical and contemporary circumstances and indicating that old stereotypes of the different Mercosur member countries did not vanish when the Asunción Treaty was signed. Significantly, the films do not place their stories in a wider geopolitical context nor address Mercosur policies and discourses directly. Instead, the films show how frontiers prompt or constrain the circulation of individuals and impact on those who cross borders. In their exploration of the border crossing experience within the Southern region, the films focus on the complex interrelationship between the linguistic, the historical and the cultural to which the interrogation of both national and regional narratives give rise. It is therefore both the crossing of borders and the erasing of them that seems to have been a preoccupation of contemporary films addressing the region's experience of globalisation and its consequent regionalisation. In production terms, too, the films crossed many borders, as they are coproductions made by filmmakers from different nationalities, brought together by funding from different countries.

The spatial boundaries established by regional integration, including the *Pasarela internacional de la Amistad* portrayed in *The Fish Child*, do not necessarily

encourage interaction between countries, but instead, as some of the films analysed here demonstrate, they exacerbate existing national divisions. Such a nationalistic perspective tends to be overlooked by integrationist perspectives that often argue for a regional identity and culture. Through the portrayal of border-crossing and journeys, these films have tried to negotiate with this territorial fusion and the erosion of the nation-state engendered by the adoption of a neoliberal economic system. As national identity is rooted in the notion of 'home', the fragmentation of narratives of nationhood has also destabilised representations of the family unit, a matter explored previously. Therefore, journeying and border crossing are also related to the disintegration of the family unit, an argument given further weight by the fact that such disintegration is also a theme in the majority of the films analysed in this thesis. Given that journeys and border-crossing became a type of cinematic manifestation of the on-going construction of identity, the films tend to adopt a road movie format whilst significantly altering it. Traditional elements of the genre such as maps, transport, road and documents function as important signifiers in their narratives.

The nation now needs to look at the 'other' in order to re-define itself. For instance, *The Fish Child* focuses on the subordination of a Paraguayan woman in order to comment on Argentine society, while *The Pope's Toilet* exposes the lack of cross-border exchange between Uruguayans and Brazilians years before the creation of Mercosur. *The Motorcycle Diaries* seems to be the only film analysed in this chapter to comply fully with integrationist perspectives, which attempt to create a regional identity against a complex historical and cultural background and encourage both integration and diversity within a culture as a reconciliation of opposites of past and present, and of self and others. Drawing on notable scholars such as Denise Leite, Grimson and Kessler propose that instead of creating 'props for integration', in their words, integrationists should focus more on the interactions and dialogues within the region (2005: 53). Given that all the films analysed in this chapter were made after the creation of Mercosur, one of the blocs that testifies to the intensification of regional integration (a characteristic phenomenon of globalisation), the importance of dialogue and cross border interaction play a vital role in the ongoing debates regarding the construction of globalised identities within the Southern Cone.

Conclusion

As I have attempted to show in this thesis, a selected body of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films address national concerns in a globalised context while moving away from their historical Third World status. They do this by problematising notions of centre and periphery first established by colonialism and maintained by the perpetuation of the capitalist system. Questioning traditional notions of centre and periphery does not mean, however, that the films are apolitical or less conscious of social problems. The way in which the films consciously comment on the countries' position is evidence that these texts do not naturalise discourses that render neoliberalism 'inevitable', nor do they neglect the domination of hegemonic countries. Instead, by self-reflexively addressing the notions of collective identities that inform their own making and staging how a community can be formed by 'central' and 'peripheral' identities both within and outside national boundaries, the films demand a re-consideration of Argentine and Brazilian film culture that goes beyond the 'marginal' culture, or even 'Third Text'. Considering that Third Texts are usually understood as 'national allegories' (Jameson, 1986) and 'allegories of underdevelopment' (Xavier, 1997), the films analysed here do not suggest the kind of collective action that Third Cinema does. In part due to the changes in the development paradigm, marginalised subjects such as the inhabitants of barren lands are now portrayed as a part of the process of reconciliation rather than social unrest. This can be seen in *Central Station*, *Born and Bred*, and *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*. The marked absence of the father figure and the breakdown of the family unit seem to reflect global transformations which have complicated models of belonging, including predetermined notions of nation and self. It is worth mentioning that the oppressing force is no longer the State, as it was for Third Cinema. The oppressing force in the films represented here is not in the public sphere and is usually represented as a person, or an overwhelming feeling of absence and loss, thereby complicating collective action. The absence of the father is accompanied by an absence of the state. The agents of power in the films are in several cases European embassies and migration control officers (*Foreign Land*; *Lost Embrace*; *The Hungarian Passport*). For this reason, as argued in Chapter 6, the feeling of exile conveyed by contemporary films is no longer a consequence of dictatorship but

instead of the characters' lack of perspective on the nation's future. Furthermore, public issues such as the growth of multiculturalism are played out in the private sphere represented by spaces such as a shopping mall (*Lost Embrace*) or a restaurant (*Inheritance*).

At the beginning of the thesis, I argued that it was necessary to move away from the binary of national and transnational, and identified the relevance of the national as an area of enquiry in the context of globalisation. Considering that some of the films analysed here are coproductions set in one or more countries and that some of them employ transnational aesthetics, which act as international points of reference (action, melodrama, accented cinema), it could be argued that a postnational approach should be applied. However, I have attempted to show that those films tend to appropriate 'transnational' content, style, and production in order to engage with issues relating to national identity and culture. Although some of my analysis had to engage with some of the competing discourses regarding a specific community, for instance discourses pertaining to the EU versus Argentine and Brazilian national discourses, or discourses on regional integration as promoted by Mercosur versus national ones, national discourses were always present and, more often than not, prevailed. Therefore, I have opted for the retention of 'national' in the title. Nonetheless, I have also explored the differences between the ways in which the nation is imagined in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema and how it was imagined in previous cinematic movements.

In Chapter 2, I established how Argentine and Brazilian cinematic traditions, in particular the New Cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, employed elements of colonial theory to argue for a national culture. If the revolutionary thrust of Third Cinema often used the nation as the focal point of resistance to neo-colonialist practices, in a globalised and postmodern context the nation appears to be fragmented, engendering a change in the political paradigm, and thus complicating political readings of the films. For this reason, contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema tend to use a more transnational aesthetic, and often a nostalgic tone, to reconfigure the locations chosen by the New Cinemas as a locus of utopian projects. In other words, I have been suggesting that contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema have responded to the changes following the re-establishment of democratic

governments and the adoption of a neoliberal economic model, and witnessed a renewal of cinematic language. This renewal usually happens in two ways, either through self-reflexive engagement with the displacement of its own maker and its own status as an international coproduction, or through nostalgic reference to the avant-gardes in the 1960s. In fact, a recurrent theme in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema is nostalgia, a feeling that comes accompanied both by displacement of the characters and the unfulfilled revolutionary projects that informed the filmmaking of the 1960s and 1970s. Following a long period of stagnation in the Brazilian film industry, some contemporary Brazilian films also appear to have the intention of narrating the decline of the state and the end of revolutionary projects in order to rebuild narratives that allow the nation to be re-imagined.

While commenting either explicitly or through formal means on the reconstruction of national identity, the films also present metacritical questions about national cinema. In part due to the fact that when most of the films studied here were made Argentine and Brazilian cinema were still not consolidated, readings of these films are often accompanied by an analysis of the role that the film has played, in terms of aesthetics, narrative, and production, in the re-emergence of the film industry. For instance, José Carlos Avellar suggests that the reconciliation at the end of *Central Station* also represents:

[...] a rediscovery of a way of observing whose purpose is to invent the country through cinema – or vice-versa, for the invention of one implies the invention of the other. The creation of an image capable of capturing the essence of the country implies creating both cinema and then the country in its own image: *imagiNation* (2003: 257).

While contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films often present reflexive readings, staging the very reconstruction of national cinema, culture and identity, the notion of national identity appears to be decentred. This reconstruction of narratives of nationhood engages with the fragmentation that had occurred in post-dictatorship Argentina and Brazil, decentring national identities. Since the so-called Conquest of the Desert that led to the foundation of modern Argentine state, as described in

Chapter 3, there has been a centralisation of politics and economic power in the province of Buenos Aires. Sociologists Grimson and Kessler state that it is 'administratively and politically impossible to bypass the city of Buenos Aires, a situation nicely synthesised by provincial inhabitants when they say, "God is everywhere, but his headquarters are in Buenos Aires" (2005: 23). This political and cultural preponderance of Buenos Aires has been challenged by some recent films, as the majority of the films portray Argentine characters moving away from the province. In fact, Buenos Aires is often portrayed as a claustrophobic place, characterised by the use of interior settings and close-shots of the characters. Prison is a recurrent location, signifying the claustrophobic experience of the city. I suggest that this need to escape from Buenos Aires is partly engendered by the fragmentation of discourses on nationhood in the context of the neoliberal economic model, which engendered a reconfiguration of the national territory in accordance with market interests while putting the country in a peripheral position in the capitalist system. Some recent films have testified to these two key consequences of the adoption of neoliberalism by depicting characters who reject Buenos Aires in order to go to a European country (*Martín (Hache)*) – to the 'margins' of the nation (*Born and Bred*, *A Place in the World*) or a neighbouring country (*Lion's Den*; *The Fish Child*). Sometimes this rejection takes place only at a discursive level, as is the case with *Lost Embrace*. However, in films like *Lost Embrace*, *Martín (Hache)*, and *Born and Bred*, the male protagonist comes back or gives up his plans to leave Buenos Aires as soon as there is a reconciliation of the family unit, which involves the return of the father of the protagonist or the protagonist himself as the father. In arguing that 'not only do Buenos Aires residents attribute national significance to what happens in their native city but also even researchers extrapolate to the country at large empirical data collected exclusively in the port city' (2005: 24), Grimson and Kessler suggest that Buenos Aires often stands for the nation. Therefore, the return of the father to Buenos Aires, or literally to the nation (fatherland) as in *Lost Embrace* and *Martín (Hache)* (although Hache's father remains in Spain at the end of the film, he rushes to Buenos Aires to see Hache after the teenager's overdose and invites him to go to Madrid with him, making reconciliation possible) reveals that those films are implicated in a dual effort to chart the fragmentation of narratives of nationhood and their subsequent reconstruction.

The Brazilian films analysed in the thesis also explored the association of the father figure and nation, but in different ways. Firstly, the return of the father is left as an open ending (*Central Station*) subtly evoked but never expected (*Foreign Land*). Secondly, the mother dies in both films, leaving Brazilian youngsters to discover a sense of belonging in ways other than a primarily familial one. In *Central Station* the quest for the father leads the already urbanised child to the pre-capitalist and mythical *sertão*, previously signified by Cinema Novo as the locus of social revolution. Like the long-abandoned hopes for revolution envisaged in the *sertão*, the narratives of the Portuguese empire such as the great navigations are seen in a self-conscious nostalgic tone in *Foreign Land*. The family and the narratives that informed Brazilian history, including colonisation and social revolution that envisaged the sea as freedom, cannot be revived, but only remembered. Argentine and Brazilian contemporary films also appear to have a common pattern in charting the disintegration of the family unit: a recurrent motif is a tragic event that separates people, and more often than not, leads to the displacement of the protagonist. These tragic events within the family unit range from the death or near death of a family member (*Central Station*; *Born and Bred*; *Foreign Land*; *Martín (Hache)*), crime committed by a family member (*Fish Child*), war (*Inheritance*; *Cinema, Aspirins, and Vultures*; *The Hungarian Passport*) political motives (*A Place in the World*), scarcity of money (*Pope's Toilet*). The breakdown of the family unit, often associated with the road movie genre, also appears to reflect the postmodern condition that abandons grand narratives such as nationalism, and complicates the sense of belonging. Therefore the increase in Argentine and Brazilian contemporary films that adopt the road movie genre can be related to the need to deal with national issues through the breakdown of the family unit and the prevalence of private matters over public ones. This process of postmodernisation is also linked to the notion of displacement; making Bhabha's point that 'the borders between home and the world become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting' (1994: 13) highly apt.

In reviewing the existing literature on Argentine and Brazilian road movies, I note that the relationship between this genre and discourses around national cinema in these countries remains largely unexplored. This is because there is not a vast literature focusing on how Argentine and Brazilian road movies differ from US formulae and

the European variants of them. Although it is not the principal object of focus, I investigate how these cinemas have adopted elements traditionally associated with this genre (transports, maps, road, and documents) in order to shed light on the ways in which films have articulated the fragmentation of narratives of nationhood and notions of belonging in the context of globalisation. In fact, all the main Brazilian films analysed in this thesis engage with journey narratives (*Central Station*; *Cinema, Aspirins, and Vultures*; *The Hungarian Passport*; *Foreign Land*). Despite not offering an in-depth analysis of the genre in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema, I conclude that, in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films, characters tend to use more than one form of transportation, usually precarious, unlike Hollywood road movies, where transportation, the object of speed, and male subjectivity are often interwoven. In contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinemas, displacement usually brings together centre and periphery both within and outside national boundaries, thereby decentring the way a specific community is imagined and deconstructing its sense of unity. As mentioned above, sometimes the films bring in the notion of return, usually associated with the father figure who re-constructs the community that was fragmented. In other cases, there is no return and no reconciliation, undermining the future of the community portrayed. In films such as *Foreign Land* and *A Place in the World*, the absence of closure needs to be put in the context of the oeuvre of the directors, Salles and Aristarain respectively, as a reunion that again relates both with the father and the nation is narrated in their subsequent films, *Central Station* and *Martín (Hache)*.

The argument I have advanced for four notions of community informing the filmic texts and productions, based on coproduction protocols, funding and the very subject matter of the films watched, has broader implications for understanding the importance of collective identity for the positioning of Argentine and Brazilian films in a global market. While the state remains the most important financial body for national film production, the boom in Argentine and Brazilian filmmaking in the mid-1990s was accompanied by an increase in coproductions with Europe. As I have shown, some of the films financed by Argentina or Brazil together with one or more European country are shaped by how the 'imagined community' that is shared by the countries involved in the coproduction is envisaged. The communities that are imagined by countries of both South America and Europe are usually based on

linguistic and diasporic belonging. The films analysed here that are produced by a shared linguistic community (*Foreign Land*; *Martín (Hache)*), approach more contemporary issues within a colonial context, as the very linguistic community relies on language, the ultimate colonial legacy, to exist. In a similar way, the two films in this thesis which are co-financed by European countries and deal with the Jewish diaspora in Argentina and Brazil (*Lost Embrace*; *The Hungarian Passport*), address the European traumatic past of the Second World War and its impact on the life of Argentineans and Brazilians. In focusing on how Argentine and Brazilian subjects can claim their 'Europeanness' and acquire European citizenship, the films complicate discourses that create borders between Europe and its 'others', as established by the immigration policies of the Schengen Agreement. Therefore, the coproductions with Europe analysed in this thesis challenge, both in terms of production and narrative, fixed notions of European identity and culture as well as Eurocentric understandings of colonialism.

Often considered as a part of 'Latin American cinema', Argentine and Brazilian cinema have also been analysed here in relation to discourses that stress the existence of a Latin American identity. The 'Latin American' label is used as a powerful marketing strategy to promote films from the region, but so-called 'Latin American culture' is often naturalised and socio-cultural, political and economic differences within the region tend to be neglected in the process. Moreover, the territorial definition of Latin America seems to vary in scholarship, given that at times Caribbean countries and the Latin American community in the USA are included and at others not. I have attempted to apply a more precise framework of imagined community, that established by Mercosur, in order to analyse how contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films engage with regional identity within the Southern Cone. My main conclusion is that while some of the films seem to be products of regional coproduction and cooperation, they are very much implicated in an effort to chart the differences of the region so as to re-assert a sense of national identity. Mercosur is a direct consequence of the adoption of neoliberal economic models in Argentina and Brazil, so some contemporary films have testified to the emerging discourses of Mercosur, in particular those relating to the non-existence of borders. Even when their narratives are set prior to the existence of Mercosur, as in *The Pope's Toilet* and *The Motorcycle Diaries*, the films still provide images and symbols that reaffirm

or question the discourses on regional integration that informed the context in which they were made.

The vision that emerges from these film coproductions that deal with the impact of globalisation on identities is the pressing need to reconstruct a fragmented national identity. By staging the fragmentation of the nation, often symbolised within the family unit, the films studied in this thesis seem to engage with supra-national notions of identity in order to create a referential point for the re-construction of national identity. Likewise, the presence of the European immigrant functions as a reminder that in a not very distant past Argentina and Brazil were the destination of Europeans who experienced persecution (*The Hungarian Passport*, *Lost Embrace*), poverty (*Herencia*) or war (*Inheritance*; *Cinema, Aspirins, Vultures*) in Europe. The European character recalls narratives of nationhood that existed prior to the fragmentation of the Argentine and Brazilian nation and the economic crisis that engendered emigration. These narratives appeared to be accompanied by a strong sense of inferiority. When dealing with the experience of emigration to Europe, the films studied here portrayed Argentine and Brazilian citizens going to the embassy of a European country, trying to acquire a European passport, or crossing the European border. Such a will to emigrate triggered by the economic crisis in Argentina and Brazil seemed to be accompanied by a marked presence of discourses pertaining to the European Union. For instance, films dealing with emigration chart how Argentine and Brazilian citizens started looking at themselves as the non-European 'other', by engaging with discourses regarding to the European Union, including for instance the emergence of notions such as 'fortress Europe'. While in *Foreign Land*, the Brazilian character sells her Brazilian passport because it is 'worth nothing', in *Lost Embrace* and in *Cinema, Aspirins, and Vultures* it is the European characters who underrate their nationality: Ariel's grandmother wants to burn her Polish passport and Johann leaves his German passport behind. Moreover, in the *Hungarian Passport*, when Kogut says that she might have to renounce her Brazilian passport to become a Hungarian citizen, her grandmother reminds her that this is a serious decision as Kogut has a 'citizenship that is practical and does not offend anyone'. It is in this context that the European immigrant reminds Argentineans and Brazilians of Europe's internal conflicts, while showing the ever shifting power-relations that allow a community to impose or remove lines of separation. In so doing, Argentine and

Brazilian films seem to counter notions of a 'borderless world' that have been put forward by globalisation theories. The representation of geographical and metaphorical borders are usually related to the recurrent motif of the passport (Figure 20), which underlines the access that characters either have or do not have to global mobility (Bauman, 1998). The passport functions as a measure of the value of the nation and its position in the global system. Therefore, the importance of the passport, the sense of self-inferiority and emigration are intertwined in some of the films analysed here. It is also worth noting that the films that mimic the migratory paths of Argentine and Brazilians to Europe in the context of neoliberalism and economic crisis focus on middle-class characters, revealing the impact of the crisis on educated Argentineans and Brazilians.

A peculiar feature of contemporary Argentine cinema is the centrality of work practices. In Chapter 3, I suggest that *Born and Bred* comments on work relations in a neoliberal context, by showing the transition from creative work to temporary and manual labour. In Chapter 4, the focus of *Inheritance* is in the dynamics of a restaurant while in Chapter 5, I argue that *Lost Embrace* testifies to changes in the configuration of commerce and business as well as the impact of immigrant workers, by setting its narrative in a multicultural shopping mall during the economic crisis in Argentina. In Chapter 7, I briefly address how films that represent immigrants from Paraguay and Bolivia in Buenos Aires also offer a comment on the type of unregulated and underpaid jobs they do. Perhaps this preoccupation with labour also reflects the impact of the growth in unemployment engendered by the crisis.

European characters are often in a position of power in relation to the Argentine and Brazilian characters. Europeans are in control either in Embassies, requesting documents of Argentine and Brazilians of European descent in order to issue a passport (*Lost Embrace*; *The Hungarian Passport*), to produce a film (*Martín (Hache)* and *Bar El Chino*), or as restaurant owners (*Inheritance*; *Foreign Land*). Although in *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures* the German character has little option but either to succumb to Brazilian rules or escape to the Amazon, he is the one who empowers the Brazilian character: he teaches him to drive a truck and to project films, and, because of their friendship, Ranulpho openly criticises a *coronel*. Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema seem to engage with this traditional 'superior'

position of the European precisely to problematise this non-European 'other' paradigm, in particular, the one established by the European Union migration policies.



20. Close-up on the passport, a key motif in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films: *The Hungarian Passport*; *Lost Embrace*; *Foreign Land*; *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*; *Lion's Den* and *Inheritance*.

In fact, the films analysed here present the 'centre' of the country, region, and world as unstable, and even reject the very notion of centre. Three main mechanisms to problematise traditional notions of centre and development are employed by the films. Firstly, the filmic narratives subvert traditional migration patterns by making the traditionally 'peripheral' areas the destination (*Central Station*; *Born and Bred*; *Inheritance*; *Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*; *Fish Child*, *Motorcycle Diaries*). Secondly, the films charting migration narratives often bring together developed and underdeveloped areas/countries, only to reject the centre afterwards (*Martín (Hache)*, *Foreign Land*). Third, the films can narrate migration waves both from centre and periphery and back again, placing the narration within a historical context that

exposes the instabilities of these notions (*Hungarian Passport*; *Lost Embrace*). Some of the films just use the centre or the periphery at a discursive level as is the case with *Inheritance*; *Cinema, Aspirins and Vulture*; *Lost Embrace*. However, most of the films are set both in the 'centre' and 'periphery', allowing the destabilisation of such notions to happen at an aesthetic level. For instance, in *Central Station*, the seaside, which has historically evoked notions of freedom and civilisation, is portrayed as a gloomy and chaotic place while the sequences in the *sertão* are well lit and show more human interaction, in particular through the display of religious faith such as songs and pilgrimage. In *Martín (Hache)*, the grey Buenos Aires with tagged walls, crowded small apartments and old cars suggest Argentina's economic backwardness in comparison to the long shots of the avenue in Madrid and the attractive settings, ranging from expensive restaurants in Madrid to a villa by a Spanish beach. However, the young Argentine protagonist misses what he refers to as the 'ugly' top roofs of Buenos Aires and rejects Madrid. The choice to portray Spain as an attractive place and then reject it in favour of Buenos Aires can be understood, perhaps, as a nationalistic act at the time as the feeling of self-inferiority was predominant amongst Argentinians. In *Foreign Land*, former metropole and colony are brought together. Although the city centre of São Paulo is more modern than Lisbon, and thus, the former colony is more 'developed' than the metropole according to Western notions of progress, the film portrays both places as empty, in particular shots of the city taken at night, adopting a film noir style which does not allow a very stark contrast between the respective representations of Portugal and Brazil. This notion is also stressed by the narrative which shows the Brazilian characters having problems both in Brazil and Portugal. In *The Hungarian Passport*, the footage of seaports and train stations is taken both in Brazil and in Europe during Kogut's journey. In portraying non-places (a term developed by Augé, 1995), transnational and transitional places, it is hard to tell which image is recorded in which country, stressing the fact that Kogut is engaged with decentring filmmaking activities. Another example is in *Fish Child* where an Argentine girl goes to Paraguay and leaves Buenos Aires along a footpath that stands for the regional integration efforts happening in the Southern Cone. By using a footpath and sequences that show an Argentine character swimming in the river in search of a legend, an act which is related to indigenous traditions, the film suggests a decentring of regional identity from Buenos Aires, often

associated with a middle-class white population, to a small village in Paraguay where indigenous narratives are part of the local culture.

It is precisely through this problematisation of notions of marginalisation and development that contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema move away from the national project that informed filmmaking in the 1960s and 1970s. If allegories back then were accompanied by the rhetoric of underdevelopment that aimed to denounce Argentina's and Brazil's marginal positions in global capitalism, now, in a globalised context, the very paradigm of development is challenged. Since extra-textual discourses can result in an overdetermination of the ways in which films are interpreted, I argue that some of the films analysed here do not allow us to develop allegorical interpretations with confidence. There are indeed films that can be interpreted as allegories given their use of symbolism and their direct engagement with grand narratives such as colonisation and religion. However, other films offer a more minimalist approach to the relationships between nation, the family unit and the experience of displacement.

The self-reflexivity of the depiction of displacement is even more visible in *The Hungarian Passport*, the only non-fiction film analysed in this thesis. In dealing directly with the filmmaker's own displacement and diasporic identity, the film engages both with individual and collective stories of displacement. If analysed within the framework of 'accented cinema', the documentary can be read as an 'allegory of exile and diaspora', in Naficy's terms. Although I have been arguing that films pose metacritical questions about their own making and position in a global market usually through the portrayal of the displacement of Argentine and Brazilian artists, the documentary is the most self-reflexive of them all, as Kogut's displacement is both the source and object of the film. As I showed in Chapter 5, it also employs anti-naturalistic devices that offer space for critical reflexion, whilst moving away from the neorealist approach adopted by the other films analysed here, in particular *Central Station*. Nevertheless, the fiction films including *Central Station*

The need to insert Brazilian cinema in the competitive global market is directly addressed by Gustavo Dahl (2002), former president of ANCINE and an Argentine filmmaker. In exploring competing understandings of cinema as an art and an

industry, Dahl argues that ANCINE stressed the importance of its relationship with the ministry of Foreign Affairs to guarantee Brazilian cinema a place both in its internal and external market. Two years later, with the document 'El Estado y el Cine Argentino', then-President Néstor Kirchner stated in the 19th Mar del Plata film festival that 'It is not by chance that when we were a growing country with justice, sovereignty and national pride, we also used to have a very strong industrial cinema, which was a model for many countries and admired by many audiences' (2004).⁶⁷ In competing with a global market and exposing the vulnerability of national, regional, and global notions of 'centre', both in terms of production and narrative subject, the films complicate Argentina's and Brazil's 'dependent' positions within the capitalist system. The insertion of the films in a global market can also be seen as a consequence of the filmmakers' displacement, which often resulted in gaining professional experience and/or education abroad. At times, the films insert themselves in a transnational imaginary, by engaging with its filmmaker's own experiences of displacement and adopting the transnational aesthetics and genres such as road movie, accented style (Naficy, 2001), and neorealism.

Another important characteristic of contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema is the recurrent use of epistolary forms that play with enunciation and reception. Letters (*Central Station*), postcard (*Inheritance*), cassette tapes (*Lost Embrace*) and film (*Martín (Hache)*) are each used to mediate the relationship between father and son. Naficy argues that 'epistolarity appears to be less a function of plot formation and character motivation than an expression and inscription of exilic displacement, split subjectivity, and multifocalism' (2001: 103). Moreover, footage of news (*Foreign Land*, *Bar El Chino*), television programmes (*Central Station*) and homemade family films (*Lost Embrace*) are recurrent in contemporary films. I suggest that the diegetic use of media can be understood as comments on the role of cinema in articulating and exposing the nations' and the protagonists' experience of both economic and identity crisis.

⁶⁷ 'No es casual que cuando éramos un país en crecimiento con justicia, soberanía y orgullo nacional, teníamos también un cine fuertemente industrial modelo para muchos países y admirado por muchas audiencias'. (Kirchner, 2004). Available at <http://www.presidencia.gov.ar/discursos-2007/24543> (accessed 5 September 2011).

Although globalisation has intensified the fluidity of identities, national identity has by no means ceased to be significant, as national issues are addressed even by films that reveal how problematic are fixed notions of identity. I have also argued that the experience of displacement and other identities, in particular European, are ingrained in Argentine and Brazilian national identity, complicating even more the treatment of national and transnational as binary. In this reconfiguring of collective identities, Argentine and Brazilian films have articulated the sense of belonging to different communities at the same time: within the nation (Patagonia/Buenos Aires and *sertão*/Rio de Janeiro), national and European (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), national and linguistic (Chapters 6 and 7) and national and geographical (Chapter 7). For this reason, the films often expose the contradictions within the discourses of belonging to a community and, as a consequence, problematise the mechanisms of community building. It is worth noting that although more than one community is at stake, the national is always present even if it is there to be problematised. Both challenged and re-affirmed, the nation appears to be the point of departure for the analysis of the de-centring of global positioning which films testify to. Therefore, to explore the uneven processes of globalisation and the merging and conflicting identities represented by contemporary Argentine and Brazilian films, must not mean to lose sight of discourses on nationhood, as the nation and its imaginary function as points of departure for the articulation and the identification of the particularity of Argentina's and Brazil's experiences of globalisation.

Bibliography

Aguilar, G. (2006). *Otros mundos: Un ensayo sobre el nuevo cine argentino*. Buenos Aires: Santiagos Arcos Editor.

Alvaray, L. (2008). 'National, Regional and Global: New Waves of Latin American Cinema'. *Cinema Journal*. 47 (3) pp. 48-65.

Alvarez, G. O. (1995). *Los límites de lo transnacional: Brasil y el Mercosur: una aproximación antropológica a los procesos de integración*. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília.

Amaral, E. F. and Fusco, W. (2005). 'Shaping Brazil: The Role of International Migration'. [Online] June 2005. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=311> [Accessed 19/08/2011].

ANCINE, 2010. 'Salas de Exibição no Brasil por Unidade da Federação 2010'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/SAM/2010/SalasExibicao/208.pdf> [Accessed 13/03/2011].

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Anderson, M. D. (2008). 'From Natural to National Disasters: Drought and the Brazilian Subject in Euclides da Cunha's "Os Sertões"'. *Hispania*. 91 (3). pp. 547-557.

Andrade, J.P. and Viany, A. (1995). 'Criticism and Self-Criticism'. In: Johnson, R. and Stam, R. (eds.) *Brazilian Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 68-71.

Andreas, P. and Snyder, T. (2000). *The Wall around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield.

Antonio, R.J. (2007). 'The Cultural Construction of Neoliberal Globalization'. In: Ritzer, G. (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Appadurai, A. (1990). 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy'. *Public Culture*. 2 (2) pp. 1-24.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Arenas, Fernando. (2005). '(Post)colonialism, Globalization, and Lusofonia or The 'Time-Space' of the Portuguese-Speaking World'. UC Berkeley: Institute of European Studies. [Online] Available at: <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0vh0f7t9> [Accessed 14/10/2011].

- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (1989). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.
- Augé, M. (1995). *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.
- Avellar, J. C. (2003). 'ImagiNation'. In Nagib, L. (ed.) *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 245-257.
- Azzi, M. S. and Goertzen, C. (1999). 'Globalization and the Tango'. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*. 31. pp. 67-76.
- Badley, L., Schneider, S.J. and Palmer, B. R. (eds.) (2006). *Traditions in World Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacres et simulation*. Paris: Galilee.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). 'Tourist and Vagabonds'. In: Bauman, Z. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 77-102.
- Beck, U. (2000). *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press/Blackwell.
- Bell-Villada, G. H. (1999). *Borges and His fiction: A Guide to His Mind and Art*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1999). 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. In: Braudy, L. and Cohen, M. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 731-51.
- Bentes, I. (2003). 'The Sertão and the Favela in Contemporary Brazilian Film'. In: Nagib, L. (ed.) *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 121- 37.
- Bergfelder, T. (2005). 'National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema?: Rethinking European Film Studies'. *Media, Culture & Society*. 27(3) pp. 315–32.
- Bergfelder, T., Harris, S. and Street, S. (eds.) (2007). *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination: Set Design in 1930s European Cinema*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Beyer, P. (1994). *Religion and Globalization*. London: Sage.
- Bhabha, H. (1984). 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse'. *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*. 28. pp. 125-33
- Bhabha, H.(ed.) (1990). *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bolaño C., Santos, C. A. and Domingues, J. M. (2006). 'A indústria cinematográfica no Mercosul: economia, cultura e integração'. *EPTIC*. 1 (1) pp.21-24. [Online] Available at <http://www2.eptic.com.br/sgw/data/bib/artigos/3c8efcd8dbd5f7e43f8edfdd665439c2pdf> [Accessed 22/09/2011].

Braudy, L. and Cohen, M. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brown, J.C. (2010). *A Brief History of Argentina*. New York: Facts On File.

Butcher, P. (2005). *Cinema Brasileiro Hoje*. São Paulo: Publifolha.

Chatman, S. (1990). *Historia y discurso. La estructura narrativa en la novela y en el cine*. Madrid: Taurus.

Cima, P. (n.d.). 'Entrevista con Pablo Trapero'. *JGCINEMA.COM*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jgcinema.com/single.php?sl=213> [Accessed 12/04/2011].

Críticos.com.br. (1992). 'Walter Salles sem cortes'. [Online]. Available at: http://www.criticos.com.br/new/artigos/critica_interna.asp?secoes=&artigo=88 [Accessed 10/08/2011].

Dahl, G. (2002) 'Arte ou indústria'. [Online]. December 2002. Available at: http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/LEITURAS/arte_ou_industria.pdf [Accessed 3/01/2010].

Dahl, G. (2006) 'Construindo a ANCINE'. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ancine.gov.br/media/LEITURAS/construindo_ancine_gd.pdf [Accessed 15/02/2010].

DEISICA. (2010). 'Cine. Cantidad de títulos estrenados según origen del film (EE.UU., Argentina y otros). Argentina. 1994 a 2010'. [Online]. Available at: http://sinca.cultura.gov.ar/archivos/tablas/Cine_Cantidad_de_titulos_estrenados_seg_un_origen_del_film_Argentina_1994a2010.xls [Accessed 09/07/2011].

Dennison, S. and Lim, S. H. (2005). 'Situating World Cinema as a Theoretical Problem'. In: Dennison, S and Lim, S.H. (eds.) *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film*. London Wallflower Press, pp. 1-18.

Dodds, K. J. (1993). 'Geography, Identity and the Creation of the Argentine State'. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. 12 (3) p. 311-31.

Dufoix, S. (2007). 'Diasporas'. In: Scholte, J.A. and Robertson, R. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Globalization*. New York: MTM Publishing.

Durovicová, N. and Newman, K. (eds.) (2010) *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Elkington, T. G. and Nestingen, A. (eds.) (2005). *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

European Commission, 2007. 'On a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World'. [Online]. 10th July 2007. Available at: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF> [Accessed 06/07/2010].

Everett, W. (ed.) (2000). *The Seeing Century: Film, Vision, and Identity*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.

Everett, W and Wagstaff, P. (eds.) (2004). *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Everett, W. (2004). 'Leaving Home: Exile and Displacement in Cinema'. In: Everett, W. And Wagstaff, P. (eds.) *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*. Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 17-32.

Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (2006) 'Motion Pictures: Film, Migration, and Diaspora'. In: Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (eds.) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 109-10.

Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (eds.) (2006) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, London: Routledge.

Falicov, T. L. (2002). 'Film Policy under Mercosur: The Case of Uruguay'. *Canadian Journal of Communication*. 27 (1) pp. 33-45.

Falicov, T. L. (2007). *The Cinematic Tango: Contemporary Argentine Film*. London: Wallflower Press.

Fanon, F. (1968). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Fawcett, L. (2004). 'Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism'. *International Affairs*. 80 (3) pp. 429-46.

Featherstone, M., Lash, S., and Robertson, R. (eds.) (2005). *Global Modernities*. London: Sage.

Feldman-Bianco, Bela. (2001). 'Brazilians in Portugal, Portuguese in Brazil: Constructions of sameness and Difference'. *Identities*. 8 (4). pp. 607-50.

Ferreira, C. O. (2006). 'Fortress Europe in the Film *Foreign Land*'. *Third Text. Special Issue: Fortress Europe: Migration, Culture and Representation*. 20 (6). pp. 733-43

Ferreira, C. O. (2008). 'Monólogos lusófonos ou diálogos tran-nacionais: O caso das adaptações luso brasileiras'. In: *XI Congresso Internacional da ABRALIC*. São Paulo: Anais do XI Congresso Internacional da Associação Brasileira de Literatura Comparada. [Online]. July 2008. Available at

<http://www.abralic.org.br/anais/cong2008/AnaisOnline/simposios/pdf/028/CAROLIN FERREIRA.pdf> [Accessed 22/09/2011].

Figueiró, E. (2009). 'Intimismo em plena bancarrota'. *Centro de Análise do Cinema e do Audiovisua (Cena)*. [Online]. 30th June 2009 Available at: <http://www.cenacine.com.br/?p=2171> [Accessed 10/12/2010].

Galperin, H. (1999). 'Cultural Industries in the Age of Free Trade Agreements'. *Canadian Journal of Communication*. 24 (1), pp. 49-77.

Galperin, H. (1999). 'Cultural Industries Policy in Regional Trade Agreements: the Cases of NAFTA, the European Union and MERCOSUR'. *Media, Culture & Society* 21 (5), pp.627-48.

García Canclini, N. (1995). *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and leaving Modernity*. (trans. C. L. Chiappari and S. L. López). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

García Canclini, N. (1999). *La Globalización Imaginada*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.

García Canclini, N. (2005). 'Cultura y comercio: desafíos de la globalización para el espacio audiovisual latinoamericano'. [Online]. June 2005. Available at: <http://www.comminit.com/infancia/node/195442> [Accessed 28/11/2010].

García Espinosa, J. (1997). 'For an Imperfect Cinema'. In: Martin, M. T. (ed.) *New Latin American Cinema Volume One: Theory, Practice and Transcontinental Articulations*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. 71-82.

Garretón, M. A. (ed.) (2003). *El espacio cultural latinoamericano. Bases para una política cultural de integración*. Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica: Convenio Andrés Bello.

Garretón, M. A. (2003) 'Por un espacio cultural latinoamericano'. In: *Todavía*. 21 (6) [Online]. Available at: <http://www.revistatodavia.com.ar/todavia21/6.garretonnota.html> [Accessed 07/06/2010].

Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity.

Ginsburg, F. D., Abu-Lughod, L. and Larkin, B. (eds.) (2002). *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. London: University of California Press.

Gorodischer, J. (2005). 'Con la mirada puesta más lejos del Once'. *Página 12*. [Online]. 16th July 2005. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/espectaculos/6-53732-2005-07-16.html> [Accessed 10/08/2010].

Grimson, A. (2004) 'La experiencia argentina y sus fantasmas'. In: Grimson, A. (ed.) *La cultura en las crisis latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, pp. 177-93.

- Grimson, A. and Kessler, G. (2005). *On Argentina and the Southern Cone*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Guevara, E. (2003). *Diarios de motocicleta: Notas de un viaje por América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Planeta.
- Hart, S. M. (2004). *A Companion to Latin American Film*. Woodbridge: Tamesis.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hayward, S. (2006). *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*. London: Routledge.
- H.B. (2004). 'Un retrato de la Babel del Once que elude todos los lugares comunes'. *Página 12*. [Online]. 25th March 2006. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/espectaculos/6-33206-2004-03-25.html> [Accessed 20/07/2010]
- Held, D. et al. (1999). *Global Transformations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Higbee, W. (2007). 'Locating the Postcolonial in Transnational Cinema: The Place of Algerian Émigré Directors in Contemporary French Film'. *Modern & Contemporary France*. 15 (1), pp. 51- 64.
- Higbee, W. and Lim, S.H. (2010). 'Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies'. In: *Transnational Cinema*. 1 (1), pp. 7-21.
- Higson, A. and Maltby, R. (eds.) (1999). *'Film Europe' and 'Film America': Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920–1939*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Higson, A. (2006). 'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema'. In: Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (eds.) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 15-25.
- Higson, A. (2010) 'Transnational Developments in European Cinema in the 1920s'. *Transnational Cinemas*. 1 (1), pp. 69–82.
- Hjort, M. (2009). 'On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism'. In: Durovicová, N. and Newman, K. *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Hunt, L. and Wing-Fai, L. (eds.) (2008). *East Asian Cinemas: Exploring Transnational Connections on Film*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Iordanova, D. and Cheung, R. (2010). *Film Festival Yearbook 2: Film Festivals and Imagined Communities*. St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies.
- Jachimowicz, M. (2006). 'Argentina: A New Era of Migration and Migration Policy'. [Online] February 2006. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=374> [Accessed 09/07/2011].

Jameson, F. (1986). 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism'. *Social Text*. 15, pp. 65-88.

Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.

Jameson, F. (1998) 'Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue'. In: Jameson, F. and Miyoshi, Masao. *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp. 54-80.

Jesinghausen, M. (2000). 'The Sky over Berlin as Trascendal Space'. In: Konstantarakos, M. *Spaces in European Cinema*. Exeter: Intellect pp. 77-92.

Johnson, R. (1987). *The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and State in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Johnson, R. (1993). 'In the Belly of the Ogre: Cinema and State in Latin America'. In: King, J., Lopez, A. M. and Alvarado, M. (eds.) *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*. London: BFI, pp. 204-13.

Johnson, R. (1996). 'Film Policy in Latin America'. In: Moran, A. (ed.) *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives*, London: Routledge, pp. 128-47.

Johnson, R. and Stam, R. (eds.) (1995) *Brazilian Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Johnson, R. (2006). 'Post-Cinema Novo Cinema'. In: Badley, L., Schneider, S.J. and Palmer, B. R. (eds.) *Traditions in World Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp.117-29.

King, J., Lopez, A. M. and Alvarado, M. (eds.) (1993). *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*. London: BFI

Kirchner, Néstor. (2004). 'El estado y el cine argentino'. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.presidencia.gov.ar/discursos-2007/24543> [Accessed 05/ 08/2011].

Konstantarakos, M. (ed.) (2000). *Spaces in European Cinema*. Exeter: Intellect.
Lesser, J. (2001). 'Jewish Brazilians or Brazilian Jews: a reflection on Brazilian ethnicity'. *Shofar*. 19 (3), pp. 65-72.

Lins, C. (2004). 'Um passaporte húngaro, de Sandra Kogut: cinema político e intimidade.' *Galáxia*. 4 (7), pp. 74- 85.

Lyotard, J.F. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Macnab, G. (2004). 'The Motorcycle Diaries'. *Sight and Sound* 14 (9). September 2004. p.72.

Marks, L. U. (2000). *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. London: Duke University Press.

Martín-Barbero, J. (1993). *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Martín-Barbero, J. (2000). 'Transformation in the Map: Identities and Culture Industries'. (trans. Zilkia Janer) in *Latin American Perspectives*. 27 (4), pp.27-48

Martin, M. T. (ed.) (1997). *New Latin American Cinema*. Detroit: Wayne State Uni. Press.

McDonagh, Maitland. 'Women On Film — Global Lens Filmmaker Sandra Kogut' . *Alliance of Women Film Journalist*. [Online]. 24th January 2009. Available at <http://awfj.org/2009/01/24/women-on-film-global-lens-filmmaker-sandra-kogut-maitland-mcdonagh-interviews/> [Accessed 03/10/2010].

McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

Medina, M. F. (2007) 'Orgullosamente (no) argentinos: la estética de la migración y de la identidad en el cine argentino contemporáneo'. In Rangil, V. (ed.) *El Cine Argentino De Hoy: Entre el Arte y la Política*. Buenos Aires: Biblos. pp. 103-17

Meleiro, A. (2006). 'Dinâmica e estrutura da circulação internacional de produtos audiovisuais entre os países do Mercosul'. In: Machado Jr, R., Soares, R. L and Araújo, L.C. *Estudos de Cinema: Socine VII*. São Paulo: Annablume, pp. 109-15.

Middleton, P. and Woods, T. (2000). *Literatures of Memory: History, Time, and Space in Postwar Writing*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Miller, T. and Yudice, G. (2002). *Cultural Policy*. London: Sage.

Moguillansky, M. (2009). 'Lugares comunes. Acerca de la figuración de espacios identitarios en el cine del Mercosur'. In: *V Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores del Instituto de Investigación Gino Germani, Universidad de Buenos Aires*. [Online] November 2009. Available at: <http://unsam.academia.edu/MarinaMoguillansky/Papers/553772/Lugares-Comunes-Acerca-De-La-Figuracion-De-Espacios-Identitrios-En-El-Cine-Del-Mercosur> [Accessed 18/02/2011].

Moisés, J. A. (2003). 'A New Policy for Brazilian Cinema'. In: Nagib, L. (ed.) *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 3-21.

Moran, A. (ed.) (1996). *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives*, London: Routledge.

Naficy, H. (2001). *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Nagib, L. (ed.) (2003). *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Nagib, L. (2006). *A utopia no cinema brasileiro: matrizes, nostalgia, distopias*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify.

Nagib, L. (2007). *Brazil on Screen: Cinema Novo, New cinema, Utopia*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Newman, D. (2006) 'The Lines that Continue to Separate Us: Borders in a Borderless World'. *Progress in Human Geography*. 30(2). pp. 1–19

Newman, K. (2010). 'Notes on Transnational Film Theory: Decentred Subjectivity, Decentred Capitalism'. In Durovicová, N. and Newman, K. (eds.) *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Nichols, B. (1976). *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Volume 1. Berkeley: University of California.

Nouzeilles, G. (1999). 'Patagonia as Borderland: Nature, Culture, and the Idea of the State'. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*. 8 (1), pp. 35-48.

Oricchio, L. Z. (2003). *Cinema de novo: um balanço crítico da retomada*. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade.

Padilla, B. and Peixoto, J. (2007). 'Latin American Immigration to Southern Europe'. [Online] June 2007. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=609> [Accessed 25/11/2011].

Page, J. (2009). *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Pérez, M. (2006). 'El Sur'. *Página 12*. [Online]. 22nd October 2006. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-3343-2006-10-23.html>. [Accessed 02/02/2011].

Prout, R. (2006). 'Fortress Europe in Recent Spanish Film'. *Third Text. Special Issue: Fortress Europe: Migration, Culture and Representation*. 20 (6), pp. 723-31.

Ramos, F. P. (2003). 'Humility, Guilt and Narcissism Turned Inside out in Brazil's film Revival'. In: Nagib, L. (ed.) *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 65-84.

Rangil, V. (ed.) (2007). *El Cine Argentino de Hoy: Entre el Arte y la Política*. Buenos Aires: Biblos.

RECAM. ¿Qué es la RECAM? [Online]. Available at <http://www.recam.org/?do=recam> [Accessed 09/10/2010].

Reinert, K. et al (eds.) (2009). *The Princeton Encyclopedia of the World Economy: A-H*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

República Pureza. (2010). 'Entrevista com Sandra Kogut'. [Online]. Available at: http://www.republicapureza.com.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id48&Itemid=55 [Accessed 09/10/2010].

Restivo, A. (2002). *The Cinema of Economic Miracles: Visuality and Modernization in the Italian Art Film*. Durham. N.C: Duke University Press.

Ritzer, G. (2000). *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Ritzer, G. (ed.) (2007). *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ritzer, G. (2010). *Globalization: A Basic Text*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Robertson, R. (1994). *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.

Robertson, R. (2005). 'Globalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity'. In: Featherstone, M., Lash, S. and Robertson, R. (eds.) *Global Modernities*. London: Sage, pp. 25-44.

Rocha, C. (2008). 'The Many Faces of Buenos Aires: Migrants, Foreigners and Immigrants in Contemporary Argentine cinema (1998-2008)'. [Online] December 2008. <http://www.siu.edu/~crocha/files/visual.pdf#page=110> [Accessed 23/08/2011]

Rocha, C. (2010). 'Jewish Cinematic Self-representations in Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian Films'. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*. 9 (1). pp. 37-48.

Rocha, C and Rego, C. M. (eds.) (2010). *New Trends in Argentine and Brazilian Cinema*. Bristol: Intellect.

Rocha, G. (2005). 'Esthetics of Hunger' (trans. R. Johnson and B. Hollyman). In: Johnson, R. and Stam, R. (eds.) *Brazilian Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 68-71

Rogoff, I. (2000). *Terra Infirma. Geography's Visual Culture*. London: Routledge.

Rubim, L. S.O. (2007). 'Cinemas contemporâneos da Argentina e do Brasil: Diretoras em cena'. III *ENECULT*. Salvador: Faculdade de Comunicação. [Online]. May 2007: Available at: <http://www.cult.ufba.br/enecult2007/LindinalvaSilvaOliveiraRubim.pdf> [Accessed 11/09/2010].

Ruetalo, V. and Tierney, D. (eds.) (2009). *Latsploitation, Latin America, and Exploitation Cinema*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

- Salles Gomes, P. E. (1995). 'Cinema: A Trajectory within Underdevelopment'. In: Johnson, R. and Stam, R. (eds.) *Brazilian Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 245-55.
- Santos, B. S. (2002). 'Entre Próspero e Caliban: colonialismo, pós-colonialismo e inter-identidade'. *Luso-Brazilian Review*. 39 (2), pp. 9-43.
- Sarlo, B. (2001). *Tiempo presente: Notas sobre el cambio de una cultura*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- Sarmiento, D. F. (1988). *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*. Madrid: Alianza.
- Scholte, J.A. and Robertson, R. (eds.) (2007). *Encyclopedia of Globalization*. New York: MTM Publishing.
- Shaw, D. (2003). 'National Identity and the Family: *Pixote* by Hector Babenco and *Central Station* by Walter Salles'. In: Shaw, D. (ed.) *Contemporary Film in Latin America: Ten Key Films*. New York: Continuum. pp. 142-77.
- Shaw, D. (2007) 'Playing Hollywood at Its Own Game? Beilinski's *Nueve reinas*'. In Shaw, D. (ed.) *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield. pp. 65-85.
- Shaw, D. (ed.) (2007). *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield
- Shaw, L. and Dennison, S. (eds.) (2005). *Latin American Cinema: Essays on Modernity, Gender and National Identity*. London: McFarland
- Solanas, F. and Getino, O. (1976) 'Towards a Third Cinema'. In: Nichols, B. (ed.) *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 44-64.
- Sommer, D. (1990). 'Irresistible Romance: The Foundational Fictions of Latin America'. In Bhabha, H. (ed.) *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge. pp. 71-98.
- Sosa, C. (2004). 'Los tres mosqueteros'. *Página 12*. [Online]. 21st March 2004. Available at: <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-1315-2004-03-21.html> [Accessed 06/10/2010].
- Stam, R. (2003) 'Cabral and the Indians: filmic representations of Brazil's 500 years', in L. Nagib (ed.), *The New Brazilian Cinema*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 205-228.
- Stock, A. M. (2006). 'Migrancy and the Latin American Cinemascape: towards a Post National Critical Praxis'. In Ezra, E. and Rowden, T. (eds.) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge. pp. 157-65.
- Svampa, M. (2006). *El dilemma argentino: Civilización o barbarie*. 2nd ed. Buenos Aires: Tauros.

UK Film Council. (2009). *Statistical Yearbook 2009*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/media/pdf/2/p/2009.pdf> [Accessed 13/03/2011]

Valença, M.M. (1998). 'The Lost Decade and the Brazilian Government's Response in the 1990s'. *The Journal of Developing Areas*. 33 (1), pp. 1-52.

Villazana, L. (2008). 'Hegemony Conditions in the Co-production Cinema of Latin America: The Role of Spain'. *Framework*. 49 (2), pp. 65-85.

Villazana, L. (2009). *Transnational Financial Structures in the cinema of Latin America: Programa Ibermedia in Study*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr. Müller.

Xavier, I. (1997). *Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Xavier, I. (2003). 'Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s: the Unexpected Encounter and the Resentful Characterer'. In: Nagib, L. (ed.) *The New Brazilian Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 39-63.

Walsh, M. (1996). 'National Cinema, National Imaginary'. *Film History*. 8 (1). *Cinema and Nation*. pp. 5-17.

Williams, C. (2007). 'Los diarios de motocicleta as Pan- American Travelogue'. In Shaw, D. (ed.) *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 65-85.

Filmography

Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes / Aguirre, Wrath of God. (1972). Directed by Werner Herzog. Germany.

Alice in den Städten/ Alice in the Cities. (1974). Directed by Wim Wenders. Germany.

Allemagne 90 neuf zéro / Germany Year 90 Nine Zero. (1991). Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. France.

Amores perros / Love's a Bitch. (2000). Directed by Alejandro González. Mexico.

Bar El Chino. (2003). Directed by Daniel Burak. Argentina.

Blindness. (2008). Directed by Fernando Meirelles. Canada, Brazil and Japan.

Bolivia. (2001). Directed by Adrián Caetano. Argentina and Netherlands.

Bombón: El perro. (2004). Directed by Carlos Sorín. Argentina and Spain.

Buena Vida Delivery / Good Life Delivery. (2004). Directed by Leonardo Di Cesare. Argentina, France and Netherlands.

Bwana. (1996). Directed by Imanol Uribe. Spain.

Carancho. (2010). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina, Chile, France and South Korea.

Carlota Joaquina: princesa do Brasil / Carlota Joaquina: Princess of Brazil. (1995). Directed by Carla Camurati. Brazil.

Central do Brasil / Central Station. (1998). Directed by Walter Salles. Brazil and France.

Che... Ernesto. (1998). Directed by Miguel Pereira. Argentina.

Che: Parts 1 and 2. (2008). Directed by Steven Soderbergh. USA, Spain and France.

Cidade de Deus / City of God. (2002). Directed by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, Brazil and France.

Cinema, aspirinas e urubus / Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures. (2006). Directed by Karim Aïnouz. Brazil.

Comodines / Cops. (1997). Directed by Jorge Nisco and Daniel Barone. Argentina.

Corte de cabelo / Haircut. (1995). Directed by Joaquim Sapinho. Portugal.

Cosas que dejé en La Habana / Things I Left in Havana. (1997). Directed by Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón. Spain.

Derecho de familia / Family Law. (2006). Directed by Daniel Burman. Argentina, Italy, Spain and France.

Deus e o diabo na terra do sol / Black God, White Devil. (1964). Directed by Glauber Rocha. Brazil.

Diarios de motocicleta / The Motorcycle Diaries. (2004). Directed by Walter Salles. Argentina, USA, Germany, Mexico, Chile, Peru and France.

Easy Rider. (1969). Directed by Dennis Hopper. USA.

El abrazo partido / The Lost Embrace. (2004). Directed by Daniel Burman, Argentina, France, Italy and Spain.

El arreglo / The Deal. (1983). Directed by Fernando Ayala. Argentina and Spain.

El baño del Papa / The Pope's Toilet. (2007). Directed by César Charlone and Enrique Fernández. Uruguay, Brazil and France.

El bonaerense. (2002). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina, Chile, France and Netherlands.

El cielito / Little Sky. (2004). Directed by María Victoria Menis. Argentina and France.

El exilio de Gardel: Tangos / Tangos, the Exile of Gardel. (1985). Directed by Fernando Solanas. Argentina and France.

El niño pez / The Fish Child. (2009). Directed by Lucía Puenzo. Argentina, France and Spain.

Esperando al Mesías / Waiting for the Messiah. (2000). Directed by Daniel Burman. Argentina, Spain and Italy.

Eu, tu, eles / Me, You, Them. (2000). Directed by Andrucha Waddington. Brazil.

Familia Rodante / The Rolling Family. (2004). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina, Brazil, France, UK, Germany and Spain.

Fintar o destino / Dribbling Fate. (1998). Directed by Fernando Vendrell. Portugal and Cape Verde.

Flores de otro mundo / Flowers from Another World. (1999). Directed by Icíar Bollaín. Spain.

Germania anno zero / Germany, Year Zero. (1948). Directed by Roberto Rossellini. Italy.

Guerra de Canudos / The Battle of Canudos. (1997). Directed by Sérgio Rezendo. Brazil.

Hable con ella / Talk to Her. (2002). Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. Spain.

Herencia / Inheritance. (2001). Directed by Paula Hernández. Argentina.

Historias Breves. (1995). Directed by Daniel Burman, Adrián Caetano, Jorge Gaggero, Tristán Gicovate, Sandra Gugliotta, Lucrecia Martel, Pablo Ramos, Ulises Rosell, Bruno Stagnaro, and Andrés Tambornino. Argentina.

Historias mínimas / Minimal Stories. (2002). Directed by Carlos Sorín. Argentina and Spain.

Hoy y mañana / Today and Tomorrow. (2003). Directed by Alejandro Chomsky. Argentina.

Im Lauf der Zeit / Kings of the Road (1976) Directed by Wim Wenders. Germany.

Juventude em marcha / Colossal Youth. (2006). Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, France and Switzerland.

La ciénaga / The Swamp. (2001). Directed by Lucrecia Martel. Argentina, France and Spain.

La historia oficial / The Official Story. (1985). Directed by Luis Puenzo. Argentina.

La hora de los hornos: Notas y testimonios sobre el neocolonialismo, la violencia y la liberación / The Hour of the Furnaces. (1968). Directed by Octavio Getino and Fernando E. Solanas. (Grupo Cine Liberación). Argentina.

La niña santa / The Holy Girl. (2004). Directed by Lucrecia Martel. Argentina, Italy, Netherlands and Spain.

La Patagonia rebelde / Rebellion in Patagonia. (1974). Directed by Héctor Olivera. Argentina.

La science des rêves / The Science of Sleep. (2006). Directed by Michael Gondry. France and Italy.

La teta asustada / Milk of Sorrow. (2009). Directed by Claudia Llosa. Peru and Spain.

Las cartas de Alou / Letters from Alou. (1990). Directed by Montxo Armendáriz. Spain.

Leonera / Lion's Den. (2008). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina, South Korea and Brazil.

Les quatre cents coups / 400 Blows. (1959). Directed by François Truffaut, France.

Lifting de corazón / Heartlift. (2005). Directed by Eliseo Subiela. Argentina and Spain.

Little Miss Sunshine. (2006). Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faries. USA.

Lluvia. (2008). Directed by Paula Hernández. Argentina.

Lugares comunes / Common Places. (2002). Directed by Adolfo Aristarain. Argentina and Spain.

Madeinusa. (2006). Directed by Claudia Llosa. Peru and Spain.

Mala época/ Bad Times. (1998). Directed by Mariano De Rosa, Rodrigo Moreno, Salvador Roselli and Nicolás Saad. Argentina.

Martín (Hache). (1997). Directed by Adolfo Aristarain. Argentina and Spain.

Mundo grúa / Crane World. (1999). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina.

Mutum. (2007). Directed by Sandra Kogut. Brazil and France.

Nacido y criado / Born and Bred. (2006). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina, Italy and UK.

Negocios. (1995). Directed by Pablo Trapero. Argentina.

No Quarto da Vanda / In Vanda's Room. (2000). Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

Nueve reinas / Nine Queens. (2000). Directed by Fabian Bielinsky. Argentina.

O ano em que meus pais saíram de férias / The Year My Parents Went on Vacation. (2006). Cao Hamburger. Brazil.

O caminho das nuvens / The Middle of the World. (2003). Directed by Vicente Amorim. Brazil.

O Céu de Suely / Suely in the Sky. (2006). Directed by Karim Ainouz. Brazil, Germany, Portugal and France.

Olga. (2004). Directed by Jayme Monjardim. Brazil.

O quatrilha. (1995). Directed by Fábio Barreto. Brazil.

O que é isso, companheiro? / Four Days in September. (1997). Directed by Bruno Barreto. Brazil and USA.

O sertão das memórias/ Landscapes of Memory. (1996). Directed by José Araujo. Brazil.

Ônibus 174 / Bus 174. (2002). Directed by José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda. Brazil.

Os fuzis / The Guns. (1964). Directed by Ruy Guerra. Brazil.

Ossos / Bones. (1997). Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, France and Denmark.

Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón / Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom. (1980). Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. Spain.

Pizza, birra, faso / Pizza, Beer, Cigarettes. (1998). Directed by Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro. Argentina.

Princesas (2005). Directed by Fernando León de Aranoa. Spain.

Rey Muerto / Dead King. (1995). Directed by Lucrecia Martel. Argentina.

Saíd. (1998). Directed by Llorenç Soler, Spain.

Sol de otoño / Autumn Sun. (1996). Directed by Eduardo Mignogna. Argentina.

The Constant Gardener. (2005). Directed by Fernando Meirelles. UK and Germany.

The Tango Lesson. (1997). Directed by Sally Potter. UK, France, Argentina, Netherlands and Germany.

Terra em transe / Entranced Earth. (1968). Directed by Glauber Rocha. Brazil.

Terra estrangeira / Foreign Land. (1996). Directed by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas. Brazil, Portugal.

Tiempo de revancha / A Time for Revenge. (1981). Directed by Adolfo Aristarain. Argentina.

Todo sobre mi madre / All About My Mother. (1999). Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. Spain and France.

Tropa de Elite / Elite Squad. (2007). Directed by José Padilha. Brazil.

Um passaporte Húngaro / The Hungarian Passport. (2001). Directed by Sandra Kogut. Belgium, France, Brazil and Hungary.

Un lugar en el mundo / A Place in the World. (1992). Directed by Adolfo Aristarain. Argentina, Spain and Uruguay.

Vidas secas / Barren Lives. (1963). Directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos. Brazil, Netherlands, USA and Argentina.

Whisky. (2004). Directed by Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll. Uruguay, Argentina, Germany and Spain.

Y tu mamá también / And Your Mother Too. (2001). Directed by Alfonso Cuarón. Mexico.

Zona J / J Zone. (1998). Directed by Leonel Viera. Portugal.

18-j. (2004). Directed by Daniel Burman, Adrián Caetano, Lucía Cedrón, Alejandro Doria, Alberto Lecchi, Marcelo Schapces, Carlos Sorín, Juan Bautista Stagnaro, Adrián Suar and Mauricio Wainrot. Argentina.